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SIEGE AND COUNTERSIEGE

The passage of the Lease and Lend Bill means that the resources of industrial America are at the disposal of Britain and that Britain will be relieved of the hampering problem of having artificially to maintain luxury exports in order to be able to pay for military necessities. But goods, whether paid for or not, are no use unless they reach our shores, and Hitler, after a winter devoted to building submarines and aircraft, has begun in earnest the battle for the Atlantic. We need not be surprised at the formidable figure of the last published shipping losses; unless some new technique is discovered, comparable in importance to the convoy system in the last war, the losses will continue to be heavy during the spring and summer. Germany's position for blockading us in this war is obviously far better than in the last. The performance of the British Navy is as remarkable as that of the R.A.F. In the last war it worked with the French, Italian, American and Japanese navies on its side. This time America has let us have some destroyers, but the American fleet is mainly in the Pacific, and even if the United States came fully into the war, its aid on the sea would be limited. In this war British ships are required to bottle up the Italian navy, while Hitler's best efforts are being used to persuade the Vichy Government to use the French navy against us. In undersea warfare the German navy is perhaps three times as numerous as it was in 1917. In the last war, moreover, her submarines had to search the wide oceans for convoys; to-day they have the use of bases all along the Atlantic shore which were in allied hands in the last war, while the British are now denied the use of the Irish bases; we have also to cope with the new problem set by the Luftwaffe which can spot convoys at sea and wireless their position to submarines as well as do damage to harbours and stores after goods have reached port.

Against this background the threatened use of the French navy to convoy supplies to France is a matter of grave concern. Hitler has done few cleverer things. The Vichy Government is pledged not to use the French navy against us, and it is an open secret that French naval officers and men are not to be relied upon to take the side of Germany against Britain. But if the French fleet is told that it is being used only to feed unoccupied France, is the same resistance to be expected? Admiral Darlan's phrase about German "generosity" could deceive no one aware of the facts, but that he should use such a phrase is significant of the extent of Hitler's hold over Vichy. If Germany is supplying occupied France with two million quintals of wheat, she is only refunding a small part of the immense loot that she has extorted. It is certain that of the supplies that Britain now allows to enter Marseilles more than half have been shipped directly to Germany. It is no wonder that in these circumstances, and at a time when the German blockade of Britain is assuming a critical phase, a demand from Vichy that food should be allowed to pass through the British blockade strikes us—especially when some is already reaching Marseilles from North Africa—not as a humanitarian appeal but as a piece of German propaganda.

To leave the matter at this point, however, would be shortsighted. From the beginning of this war we have never hidden our view that in all cases the right reply to Hitler's propaganda is a positive and constructive proposal. John Bull has regained in the last six months his reputation for courage, but he has done little to convince the world that he has acquired an intelligence to equal it.

Blank negations are a poor counter to Hitler's propaganda. We need allies on the Continent; our rulers tell us truthfully enough that we are not likely to obtain them unless we show strength and determination. Unless they believe in our capacity to overthrow Hitler, they will not dare to take our side, however fine our phrases. But if we wish to make friends among the unhappy people under Hitler's domination we must bring to Europe a positive message of hope. All the evidence now shows a growing detestation of the Nazis all over the Continent, but if this latent revolt is to be fostered, we must display our will to aid the victims of the Nazis in so far as war necessities allow. This would be true even if, in the case of France, there were not the serious danger of finding our Navy in conflict with the ships of Vichy.

The Ministry of Economic Warfare have readily replied that they are willing to consider any scheme that is practicable, and which would

not involve increasing supplies destined for Germany. Is such a scheme possible? In the last war we permitted the Americans to feed Belgium, and clearly any scheme that was feasible to-day would have, like that of the last war, to be supervised and controlled by a neutral power. To the argument that even so the Nazis would be relieved of a certain proportion of food that would otherwise have to supply unoccupied France, and that we cannot trust Hitler in any way to keep his word, we can only reply that we have to balance evils. It should be remembered that the most effective part of Britain's present blockade is not the restriction on food supplies, but the strict hold that is maintained on essential war materials, and that a limited supply of food given out in kind under neutral supervision would not bring any quantitively important relief to Germany. It would have the advantage of showing the people of France that we were still their friends, and that it is not out of selfishness, but of necessity, that we impose our blockade. But clearly at this stage Britain's answer should be a request to Admiral Darlan to state his requirements in more specific form. Is he merely manoeuvring to use the French fleet against Britain? What guarantees is he prepared to give? Does he hope to argue that petrol and rubber are also necessities for France, since without improvement in communications distribution must continue to be faulty and precarious? Or is he merely proposing that there should be food distribution supervised by a neutral committee or undertaken by the American Government? It would seem to be a case for countering the propaganda that comes through Admiral Darlan's mouth by a request for specific proposals and a statement on the British Government's part for a readiness to discuss all practical matters in consultation with the Governments of France and the United States.

The Conversion of Congress

Our keenest friends in America had become not a little impatient over the slow procedure of Congress in passing the Lend-Lease Bill, and some of them even criticised the President, who brought no pressure to bear on the Senate. In retrospect it is clear that he exercised a wise reserve. The Opposition can no longer pretend with any plausibility that he is acting as a " Dictator." In fact after this ample debate, it is now rallying to the measure which it resisted. It is significant that when the Bill as amended went back from the Senate to the House of Representatives, that Chamber adopted it by an increased majority. It secured in the House 317 votes against 71 : the original vote was 260 to 165. In a very handsome speech after this defeat the leader of the Republican Opposition pledged his party to the fullest collaboration to ensure its smooth working. The long debates in the Senate ended by strengthening the President's liberty, and range of action : every amendment designed to tie his hands by confining American forces within the Western Hemisphere was rejected by substantial majorities, while food was added to munitions and ships as part of the material help covered by the Lend-Lease procedure. There is no reason to think that the leisurely debates in Congress have caused any delay in the actual despatch of aid from the American " arsenal." The Administration is now concentrating its attention chiefly on food (wheat, cheese and pork) and on ships. It may soon be able to send us some of its " mosquito " craft—swift little torpedo boats well adapted for hunting submarines. It is also completing a survey of American merchant shipping, much of it lying idle, to discover what amount of tonnage it can place at our disposal. Public opinion understands all the implications of the submarine war, and seems to be swinging round to the view that if necessary the American Navy should escort across the Atlantic supplies destined for our use. Certainly the appropriation of £1,750,000,000 for arms and war materials now proposed by the President shows American aid will be on no niggardly scale.

Forgotten Albania

A letter from an Albanian in this week's issue reinforces a plea already made in our columns for this hapless little country. So far, neither the Greek nor the British Government has made any statement about the conditions they propose for the future of Albania. What is even more serious, the Greeks used to claim as their own much of the territory they have taken from the Italians, including Koritsa. These claims were based on the fact that the Christians in this region, though by their mother-tongue and political consciousness they are Albanians, belong to the Greek Orthodox Church and in the old days received a Greek education. For lack of such an assurance Albanians, especially in the North, have done less than they could do, to embarrass the Italian rear. We can understand that the Foreign Office may hesitate to press the Greeks to give a pledge that may contradict their ambitions. Yet if the territory of this little nation, which numbers only a million souls, should be further cut down (for it has a big *irredenta* already) it could not live. A way out of this difficulty occurs to us. The island of Cyprus belongs indisputably to the Hellenic heritage. If we were to meet the wishes of its population by assenting to their union with Greece after this war, should we not then be in a better position to secure justice for the Albanians? The Cypriots are not happy and have never thriven under our flag. We can help to make a greater Greece without injuring her neighbours of another race.

Economic Notes (*from an Industrial Correspondent*)

A weekly shipping loss of 148,000 tons is only a surprise to those who have forgotten the experiences of the last war. December, January and early February are the good months ; we have to reckon on worse losses as the spring progresses. The danger is so obvious that there seems at last some hope that the Government and the country will realise the necessity for the introduction of siege economics. The reorganisation of labour at the docks (one-sided as it is) comes immediately before the secret shipping debate—the second in two months. Once more the Government, which only reluctantly agreed to Mr Shinwell's demand for the debate, gives the appearance of waiting to be whipped into action by their critics. The figures of total tonnage and total net gains from Britain's losses after replacing losses due to enemy action, which were quoted by Mr. Alexander in the debate on Navy Estimates, are almost irrelevant. The urgent fact is our import capacity at sea and in the ports. There has been no gain in that respect. Once again we have been living on our stocks. The immediately necessary measures would appear to be (*a*) to exclude all unnecessary imports, (*b*) to import necessities with a view not only to current needs, but also to establishing stocks, (*c*) to impose a far more drastic and egalitarian form of rationing, and (*d*) to reorganise our manufactures and distribution so that we should be able to disperse stocks and minimise losses due to air attack. This reorganisation necessitates an improved system of compensation for those who have been displaced—but this is a matter which calls for a full-length article. Capt. Lyttelton's explanation of his new scheme to M.P.s suggested that he had not yet thought out the implications of the Government's new policy, and if the country is not to be alarmed by shipping losses and is to meet the situation with a good heart, it will have to announce a real policy very quickly indeed.

* * *

Unemployment is down again—to a total of 581,000, of whom 284,000 are men. The semi-official comment on the latest figures is that the reserves of male labour has very nearly disappeared. It is put at about 90,000, after counting out 35,000 who are semi-unfit, 75,000 whose unemployment is of short duration, and 75,000 who are only " temporarily stopped." This is a somewhat disingenuous calculation ; for it amounts to saying that the two latter classes are not to be counted as part of the " reserve of labour," whereas in truth they should constitute its chief element. It remains true, however, that the remaining unemployed, even including the suitable women, are not nearly numerous enough to fill the places of the men who are soon to be taken into the armed forces. But to conclude from this that the main source of recruitment for industry will be among women hitherto unoccupied is most misleading. The plans for concentrating production in the non-war trades will lead to a large release of labour. Indeed, I shall not be at all surprised if the total of unemployed rises again in the near future—unless the army prevents this by speeding up military recruitment beyond the numbers who can be effectively equipped. More women workers are urgently needed in certain districts ; but I shall be most surprised if there is, in the near future, any need for the general call-up of unoccupied women of which many working-class housewives now seem to be afraid. It would be well worth while for Bevin to give these women a word of reassurance ; for, as one of them said to me yesterday, many of them have more than enough on their plate already, without being troubled by the fear that the State is preparing to whisk them away from their husbands and children and send them to work in some new shell-filling factory far from home and friends. If this were necessary, I suppose it would have to be done. But it is not necessary ; and Bevin ought to say so loudly and without delay.

The House and the Government (*from a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

During the last three sitting days the Service Ministers, Alexander, Margesson and Sinclair, have presented their token estimates for the ensuing year. Each has taken the opportunity to speak at some length upon the functions, problems and exploits of the Services for which they are responsible. Alexander as usual was robust in his approach; presumably the impending Secret Session on Shipping was responsible for the obvious and important lacunae in his speech. Margesson made a very good speech; he has surprised the House ever since he became Secretary of State for War by his conciliatory attitude towards critics and by the broad humanity of his approach to the difficulties of the private soldier and to the problem of the alien. Those very qualities which in the eyes of his critics made him too efficient as Chief Whip are likely to stand him in good stead as War Minister.

As an orator Sinclair stands well above his fellow Service Ministers. His speech was concise and to the point. If only he could occasionally descend from the high oratorical plane which he consistently maintains to lean over the Box and talk to Members in a confidential conversational tone, he would grip his audience. The House was left with the impression after these three days' debates on the Services, that the Service Ministers are competent and have a grip of their jobs.

On Tuesday the discriminatory action of the B.B.C. against some of its performers on account of their politics created a slight breeze at question time. George Strauss asked Attlee if time would be found to discuss the resolution on the Order Paper to which over forty Members had put their names. Attlee was not disposed to find time. As time at this period of the year is congested with routine but important financial business, Attlee would have preferred the matter to be raised on the adjournment. This the critics refused. Mr. Duff Cooper's reply to questions on Wednesday showed that the B.B.C. ban has disturbed the Government and that it is likely to be lifted. Mr. Duff Cooper was also willing to listen to suggestions about improving or enlarging the present Board of Governors.

The impending secret debate on shipping dominates the parliamentary situation this week. We are having far more secret sessions in this war than in the last. This is not altogether healthy. Not only has the House the duty to keep the Government up to scratch; it has also the duty to educate the country on the fundamentals of the war situation through its debates.

But they may be justified if the information which Members need to fulfil their function of keeping Ministers on their toes cannot be divulged except in secret, and if the Government takes the opportunity to take the House fully into its confidence. It is remarkable how consistently right the House has been in its criticism and in its demand for action ever since war broke out, action both this Government and its predecessor have been forced by the pressure of events to take months later, when it was almost too late. The House was making realistic comparisons between our war effort and the German in terms of production in the autumn of 1939 and the spring of 1940—comparisons that were scorned by the Government. It took Dunkirk and a change of Government to get them admitted in official quarters. As much can be said of the use of man power and of the concentration of non-essential industries. It is true also of rationing. Alexander, Shinwell and others were pressing for complete rationing right from the outbreak of war, and rationing is a vital factor in the shipping situation.

In its secret debate on shipping the House must consider much more than shipping as such, whether the right type of cargo boat is being built in adequate numbers, whether or not there are preventable delays at the docks, whether the convoy system is adequate. What it must consider is our supplies of food and raw materials; how much we must import from abroad; in what order of priority; how far we have eaten into our stocks in the months that have gone beyond recall; what we can produce at home. Above all, it must consider how energetic action can restore a situation compromised by extravagance.

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WHAT HELP FOR GREECE?

THE subject uppermost in all our thoughts during recent weeks is one which it is difficult to discuss in print. The Greeks, a little nation of eight millions, after defeating with equal gallantry and skill the attack of one Fascist Power which outnumbers them by more than five to one, are about to face the assault of another, immeasurably more powerful. The German march on Salonika may not begin for a week or two yet. The weather in this land of mountains has to be considered and much work may be needed in preparing bases. The process of corrupting and intimidating the Jugoslavs has to be completed. We may expect that some further strokes, some of them subtle, some of them brutal, will be aimed at the nerves of the Greeks. But they have given their answer already in that spirited page of eloquent and reasoned defiance which the editor of the *Kathemerini* has written to voice the mood of this nation. It will not yield: it will not make a separate peace, nor will it forget what it owes to our airmen and our sailors by driving them from its soil. This heroic attitude has won our admiration, but it has also set us asking ourselves the anxious question what help can we send them?

This is an intricate question which has its political as well as its military aspects. A civilian with some knowledge of the Balkans may venture to form a fairly decided opinion on the political side of the problem, but he must write with great reserve on the military factors which Sir John Dill and Sir Archibald Wavell have had to weigh. A Turkish newspaper wrote the other day: "There is only one way of preventing Jugoslavia from falling into the arms of the Axis: that is for a British force, 300,000 strong, to land in Salonika." It may be right. The landing of such a force, if it were possible, would transform the balance of power in the Balkan Peninsula and it would at once affect the calculations of the Jugoslavs and, we may add, of the Turks. The former would find the courage to defend their neutrality against the Germans. The latter would be much readier than they seem to be to-day to join the Greeks in active resistance to a German invasion of Thrace. A British army of this size, if it were fully mechanised and had such leadership as General Wavell can give, could with Greek and Turkish help do very much more than defend Greek soil: it might launch a formidable counter-offensive. The Turkish editor has, indeed, put his requirements needlessly high: the appearance on the spot of an appreciably smaller British force might have the same moral effect. The Axis paralyses and swallows the Balkan States one by one chiefly because they are unsupported.

Then is it feasible, for, if it were, none of us would hesitate? The chance of using sea-power to launch a Graeco-Turco-British offensive in the Balkan Peninsula is in itself attractive, apart from the debt we owe the Greeks. Our history, no less than our recent experience in Libya, inclines us to "amphibian" warfare. But the difficulties are at least as obvious, and Mr. Bevin spoke frankly of them, when he appealed for 50,000 additional craftsmen to man our shipyards. The main difficulty is not, we take it, to find the men: we have some already available in the Mediterranean area, for a comparatively small force could now hold Cyrenaica and the desert road to Egypt. The difficulty lies in the terrific problem of transport. This army would have to draw all its munitions and much of its food from the sea. Neither Greeks nor Turks can supply themselves with munitions and the Greeks must also import wheat. This heavy demand for tonnage would fall on us just at the moment when Hitler is launching his Spring submarine campaign. It is doubtful whether convoys can still pass through the Sicilian Channel: many, as Mr. Bevin warned us, would have to follow the long route round the Cape. On the other hand, India is now a considerable source of supply, and Mr. Eden has no doubt discussed with Sir Stafford Cripps how far Russia is willing and able to sell oil, food or munitions to the Turks or ourselves. To embark on this formidable enterprise at a moment when the food supply of our island is threatened would test our readiness to take a big risk for a great end. As yet we have suffered no appreciable privations in this war: to save the Greeks Lord Woolton may fairly ask us to tighten our belts.

It is, however, easy to dwell on our own difficulties, which we know and forget those of the enemy which we must guess. The Germans also will face a difficult problem of transport. Their army on the Greek frontier has behind it a meandering and circuitous line of land communications 700 miles long by road and rail, with the Danube as the only available water-way. These communications end in the bottle-neck of the narrow Struma gorge, with the Mesta valley as an alternative and even worse route. The German railways are over-strained already and we may trust our bombers to use their chances.

It may be said that however many men we send, the Germans have always the advantage of numbers. But that is a superficial pessimism, for the Germans with all their vast reserves can send no more men to Thrace than these primitive communications can carry and supply. The same limitation circumscribes them in the air: there are few airfields at their disposal in the Balkans. One further consideration has, however, to be kept in mind. If the Germans can induce the Jugoslavs to open the Vardar Valley railway for their use, the difficulty of defending Northern Greece will be gravely increased.

We have set out these technical pros and cons as carefully as we know how: only a soldier with precise figures before him could draw a confident conclusion from them. But the War Cabinet, after listening to the soldiers, will have to weigh carefully the moral and political implications of this affair. Our prospects would be immeasurably brightened and our prestige would be raised all over Europe, if we could with the aid of an adequate British army enable the Greeks to defy the Germans. The spectacle would bring new hope to all the subjugated peoples, from Narvik to Bordeaux. It might well be the turning point in the war: it would mean that the campaign of liberation had begun. If, as we expect, the arrival of an adequate British force led the cautious Turks to abandon their non-belligerency and their strategy of passive defence, that portent alone would seem to many onlookers the beginning of the end for the Axis. Need we dwell on the contrary alternative? If the Greeks should be crushed because we did not or could not help them adequately, will any other people continue to build its hopes upon us? The average man all over Europe would tend to make the best of the inevitable, and collaborate "loyally" with the conqueror, in the style of Vichy, because he saw no better prospect in front of him. One Norway is as much as our cause can endure. A touch of bitterness would be added to these reflections, for cynics would not fail to point out that while we had rationed our help to Greece, we had men and transport enough to better our own position in Africa by liquidating the Italian empire. These are the political factors which the War Cabinet must weigh in its balance against the technical difficulties. We do not doubt that help will be sent. For our part we will not try to measure in Divisions what amount of help would be adequate. We incline to define "adequate" as such a number as would induce the Turks to end their hesitations and march boldly with us to the aid of the Greeks. What that number is we do not know, but we may assume that Mr. Eden discovered it in Ankara.

SOCIALISE THE WAR

LABOUR in "scheduled establishments" is now to be conscript labour. Under Ernest Bevin's new Order, no man in such an establishment will be able to leave his job without the permission of a National Service officer; and there will also be penalties for absenteeism under the Defence Regulations. As against this, the employer will not be allowed to dismiss a worker except for "serious misconduct" ("serious misconduct" by employer or foreman does not appear to be contemplated as a reason for leaving work), and the workman will receive a guaranteed wage by the week, in accordance with the time wages recognised in the trade, or embodied in collective agreements. Firms can also be compelled to observe reasonable "welfare" conditions—to be prescribed by the Minister; and there will be tribunals on the usual "employer-worker-impartial chairman" pattern to advise the National Service officers. To how many factories, and in what trades, the new Order will be applied, nobody yet knows; but presumably it will extend at any rate to the great majority of the workers who are engaged in producing munitions of war.

This is a tremendous departure from established practices—a tremendous extension of power over a large section of the working class. It raises immense issues which affect the whole economic conduct of the war. Taken in conjunction with the recently announced power, also in Bevin's hands, to apply to any one of us, man or woman, the principle of compulsory service, it amounts to an economic revolution—or rather to one-half of an economic revolution; for no such drastic compulsion has in practice been applied so far to the institutions of property. It is true that, in the non-war trades, the Board of Trade is now setting about another part of the economic revolution, by preparing to enforce schemes for the concentration of output in a small number of factories, and for the shutting down of large numbers of "redundant" factories in order to release labour and machinery and provide buildings for conversion to war use and for storage space. How exactly these schemes are to work we do not yet know. In particular, we do not know how profits are to be shared out between the firms which are to be kept in operation and those which are to be closed down, or how it is proposed to deal with the vast and intractable problems of concentration and compensation in the distributive trades. It is, however, already apparent that if the Board of Trade is as ruthless as it will probably need to be in order to secure the requisite savings, the manufacturers in the war industries will be left in an anomalously preferential position, as the only group left in effective control of its separate businesses, and as at the same time the privileged employer of a conscript labour class.

The new Order reinforces what our industrial correspondent said last week about the need for the State completely to take over essential war factories. It is indefensible to make the workman the conscript of the State, while leaving his employer in private possession of his business. All the arguments in favour of conscription of labour apply with at least as much force to the conscription of physical capital and managerial ability; and it is unreasonable to expect workmen cheerfully to submit to the one while the other is not applied. This does not mean that we are opposed to the conscription of labour for the war industries. On the contrary, we see no alternative way of mobilising effectively the man-power resources of this country. We hate the necessity, but there it is, and we believe that most workers are prepared to accept it, if they are given a practical assurance that it is not being applied to their class alone. But if it is so applied, there is bound to be trouble—not perhaps at once, on a serious scale, but before long, as the shoe pinches harder upon workers who are held in bondage against their will to despotic managements (there are still too many who are despotic in their attitude to labour) that abuse the power placed in their hands by a Government in which the key position is held by a lucky Trade Unionist.

The Labour members of the Cabinet will be running a serious risk of losing their influence if they apply this drastic measure of industrial conscription without definitely taking over those factories at least for the duration. This is necessary not merely politically and socially, but economically. The effective unit of the war economy is not the firm but the industry. The shortage of good managerial skill cries out for the technical pooling of industry. Let our leaders remember that of all the compulsions of the last war none was so unpopular or so deeply resented as the "leaving certificate." It is true that in one respect the Government has learnt wisdom since then; for it does not propose to vest in the employer the right to grant or refuse leave to change jobs. But the employer's word as to a worker's indispensability is bound to go for a great deal; and the difference may not be so great in practice as it is in form. Moreover, the powers taken are even more drastic; for a man or woman can be ordered to take an unwanted job as well as not to leave it, and the State's authority can be applied more drastically and over a wider field than that of any private employer.

It is one safeguard for the Government that the Communists and their followers can be relied on to raise a loud outcry, and thus to put off from opposing the new Order a large body of workers who will have no truck with them. But in face of a real and continuing oppression, such as a one-sided compulsion is bound to be, this mood can hardly persist. There is but one answer. If the workman is to be forced to serve in a particular factory, whether he likes it or not, and whether or not he could better his economic position by going elsewhere, the factory in which he is to serve must belong to the State. To compel him to serve the private capitalist is—Nazism and nothing else. It is the servile State: it connotes the victory of that very system which we are warring against. And it is unnecessary and mischievous, not in that the compulsion is unnecessary, but in that the right way of applying the compulsion in a democracy is the Socialist and not the Nazi way.

Our Labour leaders in the Government must realise this, and take a firm stand before it is too late. It is easy to see how Ernest Bevin has been forced into compelling the workers without parallel measures being taken to compel the capitalist firms. He is responsible directly for only one side of the war effort—the Labour side: the Ministries directly in charge of policy in dealing with the capitalist side are Supply, Aircraft Production and the Admiralty. Two of these are under non-Labour Ministers, and in the third—the Admiralty—shipbuilding is organised in a separate department for which, as we suggested last week, Albert Alexander cannot have very much time to spare. But Ernest Bevin is Chairman of the Cabinet's Production Executive as well as Minister of Labour and National Service; and his responsibility does therefore extend over the entire field. We wonder whether he saw the point, and moved it with his fellow-Ministers. Or did he merely see the need for compelling labour, because that came directly before his own department, and fail to

see the need for compelling capital to at least an equal extent?

The matter is serious. Only an overpowering need can possibly justify tying down a workman to a particular employer, and making that workman obey the employer's orders even if they cut right across the customary practices of the trade. For that too is involved. The workman is tied down under the new Order, not merely to remaining in his own job, but also to working on any other job which the management may order him to do—subject to a proviso that he is not to be ordered to do what is "unreasonable." There is plentiful opportunity for wrangling here, with all demarcative restrictions going by the board, and endless argument about the wage a man ought to get when he is transferred to a job carrying a different rate. Here again we are not saying that the Order is wrong. It is right and necessary, in the circumstances; but it is right, and, what is equally important, it is workable, only in certain conditions. It must not strengthen the employer against the workman: it must be accompanied by measures which will strengthen the people against the vested interests of capitalism. Moreover, it ought obviously to be accompanied by a complete, unconditional and practically effective removal of all restrictions on Trade Union membership and Trade Union activity in every "scheduled establishment."

We have reached a phase of the war in which the traditional ways are no longer practicable. It is the Socialist or the Nazi way now in the conduct of our war industries, and in this country the attempt to do things the Nazi way will not work. The temptation to use compulsory methods in dealing with labour while employers strengthen their position is the greatest danger in the war; for quite apart from the moral and other objections to reducing labour to a condition of servitude, the result would inevitably be to create an increasing discontent among the workers on whose good will the whole war effort depends. The ranks of the discontented would be rapidly reinforced by the growing number of small shopkeepers and industrialists who are now being bled to death economically. To talk as if the measures for coercing the workers are the consequence of a capitalist conspiracy is irresponsible and untruthful. If that were so their treatment of their own friends and constituents in the "unessential" trades would be quite different. Capitalism is no comfortable position in this war. But the habits and prejudices of a class system are none the less dangerous because they operate unconsciously. The moral for those who see the danger of conscripting labour and strengthening monopoly control is not "Rescind the order," or "Rescind the restrictions on unessentials," but "Equalise sacrifice" and, in short, "Socialise the war."

A LONDON DIARY

A FORTNIGHT ago I called attention to the extraordinary and erratic delays that occurred on the air mail between this country and the U.S.A. I assumed, as a number of writers to the *Times* also assumed, that the censorship was responsible. I am now given an interesting explanation. The delays of censorship are said to be short—24 or possibly 48 hours. The trouble has apparently been with the irregularity of the Trans-Atlantic Air Service between Lisbon and the U.S.A. Sometimes, when weather prevented a call at Horta in the Azores and the eastbound Clipper has flown direct from Bermuda to Lisbon, part of the mail has necessarily been off-loaded at Bermuda to wait for another Clipper. By a curious muddle the Pan-American authorities have then failed to give priority to this over-loaded mail in the next Clipper with the result that the new mail has gone through and the off-loaded mail has stayed at Bermuda for weeks together until someone has remembered it! The censorship seems to be acquitted.

* * *

Really, the Labour Party Executive and the B.B.C. seem to be very much alike: they seem both to enjoy senseless acts of suppression. When I was first told that the Labour Party Executive proposed at this year's Conference to ban *all* resolutions except its own and in addition to ban all amendments to its own resolutions, I flatly refused to believe it. But the incredible thing is true: it is down in black and white in the notice summoning the Conference, and I have seen a letter of Jim Middleton's expressing innocent surprise that anyone should be so foolish as to object. This is really too much. The Party first issues a flaming manifesto denouncing everyone who took part in the People's Convention; and now it denies the right of its own loyal supporters to express their opinions at the Annual Conference which is supposed to be the final governing authority of the Party. I objected strongly to the People's Convention, because, I think, it deceived some people by putting out points which sounded well to cover a move in the tactics of "revolutionary defeatism." I notice that Michael Redgrave, for instance, is joining the Forces and repudiates any such policy. But the Labour Party's attitude like the B.B.C. ban, might have been designed to aid the organisers of the Convention. People must express their views; and if they are not allowed to express them in the appropriate place they will vent them somewhere else. Where, if not at the Party Conference, is the spirit of democracy within the Party to be fostered and kept alive? Does the Executive suppose that it *is* the Party, and that it can hold its muted following on these terms? The idea is monstrous: if the Executive is allowed to get away with it the Party will be as good as dead. Then it will be time for a real "People's Convention."

* * *

In *Black Record* Sir Robert Vansittart refers to the massacre after the siege of Magdeburg as an example of the cruelty and bestiality of the German people. A friend points out to me that the army that took Magdeburg and massacred the inhabitants was commanded by Tilly, a Walloon, and that his soldiers were a mixed lot of Walloons, Poles and Croats with some Southern German Catholics thrown in. And the garrison that was slaughtered consisted of Protestant Prussians!

* * *

The letter which defends Sir Robert's pamphlet in the correspondence columns this week deserves a full and careful reply. For the moment I only wish to make one point. The evil of that pamphlet is not only its bad history and the damage caused by telling the Germans—including our friends among them—that we regard them as a pariah race. The real evil is this. There is literally no hope for the world at all if people are again deluded into thinking that wars come from the wickedness of any one people. Should we be much nearer peace if the German people were permanently crushed—if that were possible—and we still did nothing to remove the political and economic causes which have always led to war, whether Germans, Frenchmen, British, Russians or Japanese were the aggressors? The hope of the future, such as it is, lies in the building of institutions which will supersede nationalist rivalries and produce economic stability for Europe as a whole. The attack on *Black Record* has nothing to do with being "tender" to the Germans. The Nazis are the present curse of the world, and they must be defeated. But the future depends on us. The matter with Versailles was not that it was too severe or too lenient; but that it completely evaded the problem of how to give a decent life to the unfortunate people of Europe.

* * *

The upshot of the latest "alarm and despondency" case that was tried in Liverpool is to make one wonder whether this regulation ought not to be dropped. The defendant in this case had made a number of statements about shelters, looting, food and the rest of it, which were no more than echoes of public speeches and newspaper articles. No evidence was adduced that he had created alarm and despondency; and there was evidence that some of his audience had derived considerable cheer from an exhortation to face the facts and prepare themselves for a tough time. It is not surprising that the magistrate only fined the defendant £10 and would not grant costs to the police. I hear that under the Alarm and Despondency Clause of the Emergency Regulations (39B) there have altogether been 105 cases; most of them, I believe, were in the panic period last summer. Of these cases twenty sentences, varying from one day to three months, were imposed; the remainder were either bound over or fined, and in fourteen of these cases the fine was subsequently remitted or reduced. In truth, alarm and despondency are such vague and unsatisfactory words that they ought not to be made the basis of any case at all. They are one of the instruments by which a government that wanted to be oppressive could destroy all our liberties and very quickly undermine our morale. But that could be said of all the emergency regulations. The Home Secretary has powers to proceed, after an official warning, against any paper which aids defeatist propaganda, but he has not yet used these powers. He has only taken action against the *Daily Worker* and the *Week* under the summary machinery of 2D, which, according to Sir John Anderson's promise to the House, was only to be used in the event of invasion. I learn further that under regulation 39B, which deals with processions and public meetings, political processions have been prohibited in the Metropolitan Police district but not in the provinces, and that three meetings were prohibited under this regulation last spring. 18B, of course, has been far more extensively used. Five hundred British nationals of Italian origin, who were believed to be sympathetic to the enemy, were interned and 200 have been released; 400 out of the 700 members of the British Union of Fascists who were interned have been subsequently freed, and 130 of the 400 who were detained because of hostile

origins and associations likely to be in sympathy with the enemy have been released; 790 men and 139 women are still detained under regulation 18B. This is a remarkably tolerant record for a country fighting for its life. But it is dangerous to argue from this that our liberties are safe. We have given dictatorial powers to the Executive. Constant vigilance is required to prevent their being abused.

* * *

While I am discussing prisons and prisoners, I want to ask the Home Secretary and the Prison Commissioners whether they cannot do more than they are doing to maintain various sensible reforms that have been made in prison conditions in recent years. An official high in the service remarked the other day that all he had worked for for the last twenty years had been lost in this war. I know that the difficulties are great; the worst of them is probably shortage of staff and the loss of the better type of warders who have been called up. Let me quote one very serious point. In Holloway Gaol (which is exclusively for women) the cells, I am told, are opened when there are air raids. In some, if not all, of the men's prisons there are no proper black-out arrangements. In raids cell doors are locked and the prisoners left in absolute darkness. Aliens who were imprisoned in error and who have since been released have told me of the agonies of mind they have endured, sometimes shut up for twelve hours at a time in a blackness so great that they were not even able to take the few steps which a small cell permits. I have heard this complaint over and over again, and it needs no great effort to the imagination to realise the mental torture of enduring an air raid in a small locked cell in total isolation and complete blackness.

* * *

I wish Margesson had told us how he arrived at his figures about the "old school tie." When he said that, on a sample test, only 26 per cent. of newly gazetted officers came from "public" schools, and 74 per cent. from "grammar," council, secondary, or other schools, what did he include under the category of "public" schools? According to the only legal definition of a "public" school that I can remember, there are, officially, only nine of them altogether—Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse, St. Paul's, Merchant Taylor's, Harrow, Rugby and Shrewsbury. That was the enumeration when the Clarendon Commission was set up in 1861; and I know of no later official pronouncement. Nowadays people usually mean by "public" school a school whose head is a member of the Headmasters' Conference. But that definition brings in a large number of grammar schools, which are presumably included in Margesson's 74 per cent. Even statistically, the War Office has not settled the "old school tie" question. It cannot, indeed, be settled in that way. A much better test would be to find out what proportion of the new officers ever attended an ordinary elementary school. But even that test would break down in Scotland. For myself, I should say that in so far as there really is an "old school tie" mentality, its worst examples are likely to come from those schools whose status between the two groups of schools is most ambiguous.

* * *

With the drastic cut in feeding stuffs, there will be a further slaughtering of poultry. For some weeks there will be plenty of "boilers" for the pot; after that an intensified shortage of eggs. The Ministry of Food will then be forced to introduce a rational scheme of rationing instead of the present loose control. At present the grading stations and other producers are allowed to sell eggs to hotels, restaurants and cafés at the *full retail* price, and since these establishments can charge double or triple the price for eggs when made up as dishes and are moreover forced to substitute egg dishes for meat courses, they can afford to pay retail prices. Hence producers and traders can do much better by by-passing the shops which deal with the ordinary public and selling direct to catering establishments. The result is that in a city like Birmingham 40 to 50 per cent. of the home produced eggs coming into the town go to hotels and restaurants while long queues form at the shops. There is also an "underground" traffic between the farmers and the car population which can drive out at week-ends and pay 5*s*. to 6*s*. a dozen. I anticipate a speech from Lord Woolton saying that he will be very cross if this goes on.

* * *

On the rare occasions when the market situation works in favour of labour a large number of worthy people who ordinarily expatiate upon the objective working of the price mechanism and deprecate any artificial interference with it suddenly become appalled at its manifestations. The probation officer of Southwark Juvenile Court is rightly troubled about juvenile delinquency. In his view, raising the wages of adolescents gives boys far too much money to spend; girls in their teens who never did a day's work are bringing in a week's wages. His remedy is that the wages of these young workers should come down. Now the emergence of nabobs is not a new phenomenon and a good many people suffer from a rush of money to the head. If the moral effects of a compulsory reduction of income can be guaranteed it can be applied over a very wide range of classes and the application need not be confined to wartime.

* * *

A friend who has just been in the north of England brings back the following story which, he tells me, is guaranteed true. After the big bombardment of Sheffield the Rest Centres were crowded with homeless and lacked much necessary equipment. Sheffield Council urgently appealed to Leeds for help. The rest of the story is told by a lorry driver in Leeds, who was that day making a trip to Sheffield. He was told to load up his lorry with a consignment of knives, forks and spoons and take them with him to Sheffield. "Blimey," he said (or words to that effect), "that's just what I'm bringing back from Sheffield to Leeds on my return journey." And that is what in fact he did: he took 5,000 knives, forks and spoons to Sheffield to relieve an emergency; he took back a larger number in the ordinary way of business!

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5 - for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to H. M. Pelling.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Neither the small business man nor the small consumer, he said, would be represented on the new Industrial and Export Council, members of which would be "big business" men, who would also be the voice of the small man.—Mr. Oliver Lyttelton, reported in the *Daily Mail*.

If a German walked into this court as a plaintiff in an action I would not listen to him.—Mr. Justice Bennett in the Chancery Division, reported in the *Birmingham Mail*.

In this great crisis in our history we cannot afford to forfeit help from the unseen for the sake of Sunday amusements. The risk is too great, the price is too high. Surely there are other alternatives?—Advt. in *Daily Telegraph*.

Leslie Howard as Hamlet? God forbid! Playgoers and film fans have no further use for the "Moody Dane," even when characterised by one of our greatest actors. The whole story is "out of joint" with modern needs and especially with wartime requirements.—Letter in *Picturegoer*.

SPANISH CATHOLICISM

[In a former article, published in this journal on January 25th, Mr. Arturo Barea discussed the nature of Spanish Catholicism. Here he deals with its relations with international Fascism.]

RELATIONS between Catholicism and Fascism in Spain are in striking contrast to relations between Catholicism and Fascism in Germany. Though Hitler has signed a Concordat and nominally remains a Roman Catholic, he does not need the Church of Rome in order to rule Germany. The Fascists of the Spanish Falange, on the other hand, who are still only on the road to total political power, cannot reach their goal without the assistance of the Church.

Neither did Catholicism in Germany need Fascism. It is the religion of a minority; it was in no danger of losing its political power through the rise of democracy. Under Nazi rule, the persecution of the Catholics during the first years was excellent propaganda; and now, when the most important rights of the Church are protected by a Concordat, it draws a steady benefit from its status as an opposition under duress. The contrary is true of Spain, considered by Catholicism as a fief of a thousand years' standing. The Church cannot afford to lose this fief. When the Spanish Republic introduced Disestablishment, the Spanish Church took up the fight against the Republic. If it was the policy of German Catholicism to submit to secular power and to grow stronger under persecution, the policy of Spanish Catholicism was to preserve its power by persecuting others.

Thus the Siamese Twins of Spanish policy were bred, a monster whose parts cannot be separated from each other because one of them, or both, would die from the operation. It is necessary to realise this inseparability, and at the same time, the frantic struggle of each of the twin bodies to win power over the other without destroying their joint existence. While Spanish Catholicism and the Spanish Falange have become inseparable, Falangism has entered into an equally indivisible alliance with international Fascism. Thus, Spanish Catholicism is now in its turn the accomplice of international Fascism; and this fact converts into fellow-accomplices all those who abet and applaud that political Catholicism of Spain which—as I tried

to show in a previous article—has nothing in common with the simple faith of the Spanish masses and with their true priests.

The two strongest forces in the Spanish State are at present the Falange and the Church. The truly Fascist nucleus of Falange has, of course, never attempted to penetrate into the Body of the Church. On the contrary, the Old Guard of Falange—the "Old Shirts"—included in their programme of 27 Points one proclaiming the right to lay education. General Franco, not an "Old Shirt," rejected this point when he adopted the other 26 clauses as the programme of the diluted Fascist-Traditionalist Party of which he made himself the leader. In the course of a long process, political Catholicism invaded Falange and then helped to develop it, while endeavouring to emasculate its "pure" Fascism.

The Nazis were quick to recognise this reality when they organised their network in Spain and simultaneously appropriated Falange. I personally knew a Spanish lawyer who was counsel to the German Embassy, Señor Rodriguez. He was a member of Falange, and during a visit to Germany, became a member of the S.A. Later on, his Nazi reliability was doubted by members of the German colony in Madrid. I have seen a letter of recommendation in which a prominent Nazi vouched for him because he was a Falangist, and because Falange, "though a Catholic organisation," was under Spanish conditions the equivalent of the N.S.D.A.P.

The purely Catholic group within Franco's Spain wants to maintain the authoritarian, totalitarian State it helped to create by the Civil War. It supports Franco and tries to strengthen his hand against the radical wing of Falange. Its social aims are a "corporative" framework, reminiscent of the Encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, and within this framework the preservation of the remnants of feudalism. The supreme and sole moral and educational authority in this State would be the Church. The Falange-Fascists demand a Falangist State in which they have absolute and supreme power, and a society formed by the "National-Syndicalist Revolution." While they take the collaboration of the Church for granted, they want to be independent of its tutelage.

At present, the battle is still undecided, though Falange seems to be gaining ground. New Spain has not yet concluded a Concordat. The Youth Front, a compulsory State organisation, includes Christian education in the training of the complete Falangist. *Auxilio Social*, the Social Relief organisation, is a field for competition between the two tendencies. On February 2nd, a law against birth-control was published, which had been worked out in agreement with the Church—and also because a growing population is needed for a powerful Spain. The Jesuits have regained the legal right to every kind of educational and material activity, a right which they had never been able to hold since they were driven out under Charles III. "Catholic Action" exists, carefully excluded from any but spiritual and charitable activities, but the Catholic Trade Associations have been swallowed up by Falangist Syndicates.

The political accent, however, varies immensely. As far back as February 8th, 1937, the *El Pensamiento Alavés* of Vitoria, organ of the most backward, most feudal, most traditionalist province of Northern Spain, published an article in which it emphasised that it was essential for the Basques, and particularly for their priests, to understand the necessity of supporting the Nationalist Movement, because "it was their obligation to identify Catholic religion with Spanish Fascism." In January, 1941, Señor Ibañez-Martín, the Spanish Minister of Public Education, described the Christian renaissance which was taking place in Spain from the elementary schools to the universities; he stipulated for Spain a "religious Falange" and full agreement between Church and State.

Gamero del Castillo, the Deputy Secretary and Minister of Falange, on January 13th, 1940, visited the Jesuit College in Malaga where he had been educated. He expressed his satisfaction that Franco's Government had redressed the "sectarian injustice" of the Republic by enabling the Company of Jesus to reopen its colleges. In the times of the great Spanish Empire, Jesuits had educated an aristocracy deeply imbued with the Catholic faith, and with convictions which were the basis of a strong Spain. The colleges of the Company would, he continued, now resume their traditional work in accordance with Spain's new mission in the world.

Yet, at the closing of the Fifth Congress of the Feminine Section of Falange on January 18th, 1941, that same Gamero del Castillo thundered against the "political heterogeneousness" within the present régime, which must be eliminated by Falange, the only Party with a political plan for Spanish unity, the Party whose first duty it was to conquer total power in the State.

Two months before, on November 14th, 1940, the Director of the Publicity Office in the Spanish Propaganda Department, Pedro Laín Entralgo, spoke about "Ethical Values and National-Syndicalism." In that astonishingly searching speech he tried to trace the foundations of Falange ideology: beyond the social, national and revolutionary elements which it shares with Italian Fascism and German National-Socialism—and possibly with Russian Communism if it continues to develop towards "National-Communism"—Spanish National-Syndicalism contains a recognition of the eternal religious values belonging to Spanish tradition and history. He firmly repudiated criticism of the National-Syndicalist revolution from the point of view of the Church, whose teachings were indeed complementary to those of Falange. The old form of unity between Church and State through a dynasty had been broken up and could never be restored under modern conditions, just as aristocracy had lost its *raison d'être*. Attempts within the Liberal State to establish a Christian democracy through Catholic Parties of the type of the Italian Popolari had been a failure because these parties implicitly recognised the capitalist class society and limited themselves to social palliatives. He came to the conclusion that, in the course of Spain's National Revolution, the Christian ideal of brotherhood would become reality through the social conception of Falange.

These quotations, which could be prolonged indefinitely, show the divergencies in theory; but they also show that political Catholicism cannot lose either way in Spain, if only the totalitarian regime as such is maintained. It *can* win supremacy of the kind enjoyed by a similar group under the dictatorship of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg in Austria, provided the truly Fascist wing of Falange does not achieve total power. Yet always, even in a complete Falangist revolution, the Church could expect to maintain its political influence; just as in pre-war Italy the Clerical organisations had to overcome certain difficulties, but steadily strengthened their power, if not their moral position—first by subordination to, and then by collaboration with, the Fascist State.

There is one important point in which militant Spanish Catholicism agrees with militant Falange: in the ambition for an "Imperial Spain," for Spain's "cultural and spiritual empire" in Latin-America.

The South American States are of extreme importance to the Vatican as the only solid bloc of Catholic countries, besides the precarious European group Italy-Spain-Portugal with Vichy-France as a possibility. Unobserved by most people, the ties between the South American Republics and the Vatican have been strengthened during the past year, in a reaction against those forces which stand for individual religious freedom and Disestablishment. During the last few months alone, two Republics, Paraguay and San Salvador, concluded Concordats with the Vatican and received their Papal Nuncios, and two Eucharistic Congresses were held in Uruguay and in Peru, both addressed over the wireless in Spanish by that most eloquent orator and astute diplomat, Pius XII, former Secretary of State Pacelli. He stressed Spain's rôle in bringing civilisation, language and faith to these countries. In the name of the same historical achievement, Franco's Spain claims to become once again the "spiritual axis of the Hispanic world."

The new Catholic-Spanish Empire, spiritual or otherwise, could only be formed against the influence of the U.S.A. in the Americas. To Spanish Catholics, the Anglo-Saxon countries are still the embodiment of the subversive spirit of the Reformation, Individualism and Liberalism, of which the newer evil, Communism, is but an offspring. Falangists openly announce that Spain's greatness will be achieved in the evolution of Hitler's New Order in which, incidentally, they imagine their Spain as Germany's worthy partner, instead of effeminate Italy. The collaboration with Nazi Germany is fully accepted by Spanish Catholics, though the late Cardinal Gomá had some qualms after the outbreak of this war, particularly on account of the Russo-German Pact.

This is one of the points where English Catholics and diplomats defend cherished illusions. It is believed in this country that Spanish Catholics, as Catholics and Spaniards, must be averse to Nazi paganism and to the deification of Hitler. Spanish reality, however, is very different from these hopes. The two facts that Hitler is a Roman Catholic who likes to speak in an apparently religious vein, and that the Vatican has concluded a Concordat with the National-Socialist State, are in themselves enough to satisfy the conscience of the average Spanish Catholic. The closing of convents and Catholic schools in Germany does not materially differ from the closing of convents or the expulsion of the Jesuits under one or the other of Spain's own Catholic Kings. In the eyes of Right-wing Catholic Spaniards, Catholics persecuted in Poland or priests sent to con-

centration camps may well have deserved their fate at the hands of the conqueror, just as did the Basque priests. The persecution of the Jews on account of a racial theory can hardly shock those who uphold the traditions of the Inquisition—not the Inquisition of the Middle Ages, but that of a hundred years ago, when descent from Jews or Moors still debarred anybody from entry into certain colleges and Religious Orders.

On the contrary: Spanish official propaganda and press continually spread reports about the flourishing Catholic life in Germany. Last autumn, the newspaper *Alcazar* went so far in its glowing description of Catholic prosperity in Germany that the Vatican Radio found it necessary to protest against the exaggeration. But Spanish Catholics are inured to friction between a reactionary Government and a national Church, between the High Clergy and the Vatican, and the praise of German Catholic life continues. Even the pact with Russia appears in the light of Spanish propaganda as a clever subterfuge by which Germany keeps Russia in bounds and prevents the far more dangerous alliance between atheist Russia and heretic England, between Communism and its begetter, Liberalism. Thus from this angle, too, Spanish Catholics join the front against England.

Behind all this casuistry of the Spanish Catholics stands the simple knowledge that, by joining forces with the Nationalist Rebellion, the Spanish Church has deepened the chasm between itself and the common people, has linked its fate to that of Fascism—and must inevitably sink with Fascism.

* * *

Our world is revising old and new values in a process which alone in England, of all Europe, can follow its course in freedom. Catholicism also is subjected to this painful process: Catholicism in its capacity as a political force.

I believe Catholicism to be eternal, as all Christian faith, in that it is the gospel of the poor: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice. . . ."

Therefore I, renegade from that other political and non-Christian Church, a Spaniard of the common people, hungry for a cleaner creed, feel the right to raise Zola's immortal cry: "J'accuse!"

ARTURO BAREA

COUNTRY NOTES

Cage Birds in Time of War.

WE may have more serious problems to consider, but a very real one has arisen now for those who keep birds in cages or aviaries. Seed is unobtainable; or, rather, is obtainable only in a form which the Ministry of Food approves but the birds do not. In this case, disagreement with a Ministry means not merely a dispute but death.

I experienced this minute tragedy last week. I have a small aviary under an old fig-tree. It included three cockatiels, a green parrot, six Java sparrows, neat as parlour-maids, an Australian dove, dowdy as a charlady huddled into a shawl, a parakeet bright as a gipsy, a dark blue marsh bird, and about forty budgerigars of many colours, green, yellow, blue, mauve, gay as a flight of butterflies.

I put out the new approved seed. Trefoil, it is called. I put out plenty, having mixed it with millet while I could still get millet, but having observed that the birds left it untouched. I did, however, hope that they would take to it when they were offered no alternative. Late in the afternoon, knowing that birds have very little starvation-resistance, I went back to see what was happening. Twenty-five budgerigars and all the Java sparrows lay dead on the floor. The rest were jostling weakly on the feeding-tray, a mosaic of feathered backs. The tray was still full of trefoil, but the birds were preferring death to a distasteful food.

I saved their lives that day with some handfuls of groats and sunflower seed, and managed after that to procure a few small packets by scrounging round the shops in two or three local towns. But what of the future? Sunflower seed is hard to come by, and it goes against my conscience to give groats to birds. The season is unfavourable to us too, for although the summer will bring plantains and the wild grasses (which can be harvested and stored), there is nothing now in the garden or the hedgerow. Even the groundsel and the chickweed are shrammed and frostbitten. Groundsel always has to be given cautiously, and as for chickweed, it is said to increase fecundity, being rich in vitamin E, and increased fecundity is the last thing that any owner of budgerigars could wish to encourage at the present time. It appals me to think of the number of eggs that my surviving budgerigars will lay within the next six months and the proportion of babies that they will hatch out. How am I to feed them and their mothers? Am I to hit them all over the head—it is pitiably easy to kill a bird, a tap on the skull will do it or a squeeze of thumb and finger, or even a bite of the teeth as a ghillie will crack the head of a partridge.

Or am I to keep them going, those lovely bright useless ornaments in an ugly world?

One can sacrifice chickens without a sentimental qualm, since, after all, that is the fate prepared for them by nature and they serve a useful purpose when dead. But to kill off this coloured confetti of the aviary seems wanton, if some means can be devised to sustain them. The next few weeks will be the difficult weeks, before the natural harvest comes in. Has anyone any suggestions to offer? In return for any that may be made, I may note that budgerigars take very kindly to the seeding sprays of buddleia, and seem able to eat any amount of it without harm. That, of course, will not be available for some time and the need is urgent. It is worth remembering, however, as a hint for autumn and winter feeding.

Dogs in Time of War.

The problem of feeding our dogs is less acute, since the dog is less pernickety and his diet may be supplemented by a whole range of oddments, but vets. and kennel-owners hold the opinion that some connection may exist between wrong feeding and hysteria. Too much starch, they say, present in certain proprietary brands of dog-meals and dog-biscuits, may produce an occurrence of this unexplained complaint. It is grievous to see even a small dog suddenly taken by hysteria. In the case of the small dog, one is sorry for the dog, but one can throw one's coat over its head and carry it into the darkness and quietude essential to its recovery. (I know a spaniel who very tactfully just retires into a discreet corner, loses consciousness, and has to be brought round with a coffee-spoonful of brandy.) But the case of the large strong dog is different. It is terrifying when this temporary madness overcomes them. It is horrifying when one's own dog turns against one; when one's voice and command can no longer touch the chords of devotion and obedience in the brain. Without any warning my Alsatian became a mad wolf in a snowy field. A dreadful shrill bark like the tearing of calico rent the air. Fangs snapped at the air; fangs tore my coat. It was like being attacked without provocation and with the utmost ruthlessness by one's best friend.

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

FIFTY YEARS AGO

Fifty Years Ago. I saw this heading in the *Bedfordshire Times* the other day over the reprint of an article which was published in it half a century ago, and I began to read in the spirit of an antiquarian. Then I noticed the date of the fifty-year-old issue of the *Bedfordshire Times* and saw that it was only the 21st of February, 1891. Immediately my point of view changed. 1891, I told myself, was not very long ago.

I was myself already almost twelve years old then, and my passions were deeply engaged against Mr. Gladstone's quite modern movement to foist Home Rule on the loyal North of Ireland. I saw the peril drawing nearer; and if it had drawn nearer more quickly, it might have saved us from a great deal of trouble later on; but I did not realise this at the time. I thought the skies looked distinctly ominous. Not that this worried me much as I sat on a dappled horse on the merry-go-round or plunged over a hillock on the switchback railway at the seaside. Not that it worried me as I ate a warm loaf at breakfast or my share of a barmbrack or a sally-lunn at tea. Still, I was of the same mind of the aged Presbyterian minister who, when invited to testify against Home Rule at a public meeting, began his speech by shaking his fist and uttering what still seems to me the magnificent apostrophe: "Gladstone, you old ruffian, you! Gladstone, you old scoundrel, you! Gladstone, you old devil, you!" And that was only fifty years ago when people talked nonsense with the best intentions in the world as they have continued to do ever since.

Fifty years. Why, only six hundred crescent moons have appeared in the interval and grown to the full and waned into darkness almost before we have become accustomed to their shining. A mathematician might count a few more, for the learned tell us that the length of the lunar month and of the calendar month differs. But what does it matter—six hundred or six hundred and fifty? It is a little longer than six hundred and fifty days or minutes or seconds, but not much longer. Swift as a weaver's shuttle fly our years. 1891 does not seem to me to be much more of a piece of antiquity than 1913. Antiquity for me begins about the time of the Crimean War and becomes mellow at the date of the Battle of Waterloo. Those were the old days—the good old days or the hard old days as you will think of them according

to your prejudices. But in 1891 almost everybody was still living. I can remember it very well.

That is not the point I meant to write about, however. The date distracted me for the moment from the article in the *Bedfordshire Times*, which was a report of an action taken by a groom against his employer for wrongful dismissal. The employer was Mrs. Grimshawe, of Goldington Grange, and the groom, named Brightwell, according to the reporter who gave him no Christian name, maintained that Mrs. Grimshawe had no right to dismiss him merely because he grew a moustache. He had entered her service as groom and coachman, it was stated, in the previous September and, according to the evidence, " at the time he had no moustache nor was there any stipulation made at the time that he was not to wear one." Not long afterwards, unfortunately, he had an attack of inflammation of the lungs, and on the advice of his doctor began to grow a moustache. This, says the report, " gave umbrage to Mrs. Grimshawe who on 22nd January peremptorily directed plaintiff to cut off the hirsute appendage, which was then in an incipient stage." The man, we are told, gave no immediate answer, but, more than a fortnight later, fired perhaps by memories of Magna Charta, he refused to obey the order, whereupon Mrs. Grimshawe, also remembering that human beings have rights as well as duties, told him to go. The groom named Brightwell went, but engaged a solicitor, Mr. Stimson, to appear for him at the Bedford County Court and demand the sum of five pounds as compensation.

The argument that followed in court was extremely interesting from a legal point of view. " Mr. Stimson's contention was that the order to cut off the moustache was not a lawful order which the groom was bound to obey and that, unless defendant could prove an invariable custom in the neighbourhood that grooms in the employ of persons of the defendant's social rank should be clean-shaven, the plaintiff was entitled to recover." The problem at this point obviously became a delicate one. " Plaintiff, in his statement, said that he knew at least three grooms in the neighbourhood who wore moustaches "; but the question to be settled was not whether these grooms wore moustaches, but whether their employers were of a social status equal to that of Mrs. Grimshawe. On this matter Mrs. Grimshawe had no doubts. " Cross-examined by Mrs. Grimshawe (who conducted her own defence), plaintiff gave the names of the gentlemen who employed the grooms. Mrs. Grimshawe said that the three gentlemen named were not of the same social rank as her late husband, and one of them was a wine merchant."

If I had been the judge, I think I should have stopped the case at this point and given my verdict in favour of Mrs. Grimshawe. After all, life is a fairly serious business and I can understand her objection to being driven to church by a man who by flaunting a moustache would suggest to the neighbours that she knew no more about the eternal decencies than a wine-merchant. I am fond of wine-merchants myself, but I can see how one of them, having become easygoing as the result of his delightful trade, might let down the standards of the county. If standards are to be maintained, the rot should be stopped where it begins; and it seems to me that Mrs. Grimshawe showed considerable prescience in realising that something pretty serious might happen to the county if grooms were to be permitted to wear moustaches even after an attack of inflammation of the lungs. (I think, by the way, the groom ought to have been compelled to produce a doctor as witness to the effect of a moustache on inflammation of the lungs. If it is good for inflammation of the lungs, why not for influenza, gout, hobnailed liver, and what not?

The judge, however, did not raise this question. He devoted himself exclusively to the consideration of use and work and whether customs had changed since Mrs. Grimshawe began to employ liveried servants. Mrs. Grimshawe declared that since 1854—thirty-seven years earlier—no liveried servant in her employment had worn a moustache; but the judge refused to accept the view that the Grimshawe standard had continued in the interval to be the invariable standard of the best people. " His Honour Judge Bagshawe said that some years ago no liveried servant or butler, or even private gentleman, except it were a dragoon officer wore a moustache; but since 1854, the usages of society had changed and the moustache had developed since then. In giving judgment for the plaintiff, His Honour said that, however outrageous it was as a breach of manners to wear a moustache, the man would perform his duties as a groom as well with a moustache as without one."

I wonder what a modern authority on law would think of this verdict. I do not know whether appeals from a County Court judgment can be carried to the House of Lords, but I feel sure that, if this case had reached the House of Lords, Mrs. Grimshawe would have obtained a more rational decision. After all, even Judge Bagshawe admitted that the wearing of a moustache might be an " outrageous " breach of manners; and it seems reasonable to hold that Mrs. Grimshawe, as she went on a shopping expedition along the main street of Bedford, had a right to be protected against outrageous breaches of manners on the part of the employee sitting on the box of her carriage. You may say that a moustache is only a little thing, and that to prevent a fellow-creature from growing a moustache is an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the subject. But, after all—whether by custom or by law, I do not know—the Pope of Rome is not allowed to grow a moustache; and what is good enough for the Pope ought to have been good enough for Mrs. Grimshawe's groom.

Apart from this, Mrs. Grimshawe was faced with the question: " If grooms are allowed to wear moustaches, where are you to stop? " Is it more of an interference with liberty to forbid a groom to wear a moustache than to forbid him to smoke a clay pipe when on duty? Is there any theory of liberty according to when he should be permitted to wave his hat and kiss his hand to housemaids when driving Mrs. Grimshawe into town? After all, if there had been nudists in those days, and Mrs. Grimshawe's groom had claimed the right to sit naked on the box, can one conceive that any judge, however broad-minded, would have supported him in his claim? It seems to me that such antics would rightly have given Mrs. Grimshawe what is called " umbrage," and that she would have been justified in getting rid of her groom at the earliest possible moment.

I believe in the rights of man, but I do not believe that man has the right to do anything he likes in all circumstances. Even the right to grow a moustache is not absolute. I should feel no compunction in curtailing the liberty of a man who said he was wearing a moustache because he had had inflammation of the lungs. To-day, however, as in 1891, such a man would undoubtedly have supporters. This shows how little we have changed in the interval. The truth is, in so short a space we have had very little time to change. Y. Y.

MISS LEE

WHEN Ford got back to the incident at two in the afternoon he noticed that the rescue men seemed moody. They were picking about on the top of the mounds of debris without much apparent purpose. It was raining. One of them came over and sheltered beside Ford in a doorway. He complained that the borough did not provide them with adequate mackintoshes or with a change of overalls.

" No good catching your death for a lot of stiffs," he said, excusing himself for having knocked off.

Just then Ford noticed a change in the atmosphere of the incident. The nearest squad of rescue men had become alert again. Quin, who was again incident officer, came over and told him that they thought that they had heard tapping.

The whole squad began working strongly and fast. One or two men would from time to time get excited and begin to grab at the debris, flinging it aside. But that didn't pay in this case, for it was evident that tons of stuff would have to be moved before they had hope of coming on anyone. Ford took off his equipment and began the usual filling of baskets, and the passing of them back, along a chain of hands to be emptied. Every fifteen minutes or so one or other of the rescue men would ask for stillness, would listen for the tapping and would call down. After two or three times some of the rescue men began saying, " Cut it out. Get on with it. You're holding up the work. We haven't much time."

Ford guessed that the rescue men were thinking not only of getting to the buried person, or persons, as quickly as possible, but also of getting the job done before the dark and the raiders came back again. But he couldn't conceive that there would be any difficulty about that. The idea of another night and another raid beginning was a remote and repulsive hypothesis—the last night and the last raid seemed only just over. In any case, it was a difficult matter to decide how often it was justifiable to hold up the work in order to get a signal from below. It was necessary to do so from time to time, because by means of such signals alone could they hope to locate the buried persons. And unless he, she, or they could be located, with gradually increasing exactitude, hours might be wasted in sinking shafts and tunnelling in the wrong places.

The rescue men were attacking this very large, irregularly shaped mound of debris from three different positions. After a bit one of the parties working some way away from the cave from which the tapping had first been heard insisted on silence. He claimed that he could hear a voice as well as tapping. After two or three more

bouts of digging this rescue man definitely got into touch with the buried person. A voice responded several times, and they all got a much better idea of where to dig. It became apparent that the original cave, which had been deepened into the beginning of a shaft, was much too high up the mound. With reluctance the rescue men who had been working up there were induced to come down and join those who were cutting into the side of the mound. It was now half-past three. The rescue man who was deepest into the tunnel, near the bottom of the mound, began to shout.

"Who are you?" he called. He listened. "What name?" he repeated. He listened. "Bee, did you say, Bee?" "It's a woman," he said, turning his face upwards. "Bee, or Lee, or Tee, or some such name." Quin consulted his records of who should have been sleeping in the house.

"There should have been a Miss Lee," he said. "That's right," said the rescue man. "That's what she's trying to say."

They worked on, obviously encouraged by knowing now that it was a definite person, whose name they knew, that they were trying to reach.

It was now half-past four. The light was perceptibly weaker. Ford realised that, far from there being plenty of time, it was going to be a race to get her out before the darkness and the fireworks began all over again.

The rescue men said nothing, but they began to get a little short and abrupt with each other, working against time. There was more in it, Ford felt, than the rational fear of working in the difficulties of the darkness and a new raid. There had been re-awakened in them all an older fear of the beasts, the spirits, and the dark.

They dug. At six-twenty the sirens went. "He's back," said the man working next to Ford. The guns began. At first they heard the thud of distant batteries, south of the river; then the sharp note of their familiar local guns, and then the rising and falling drone of the bombers' de-synchronised engines. The rescue men took no notice. It was still possible to work fairly effectively without the use of torches. Then they heard a wailing from the mound. It was Miss Lee. She too, imprisoned, had heard the new raid begin. Her nerves gave way. An incoherent, terrified sound, occasionally crystallising itself into words, came from her. Ford heard, "It's there again. They'll get us all; they'll get me." The rescue men began to shout back to her, "No, they won't; you're all right; stick it now." But the wailing shouts went on. "Can't you save me? Don't be so slow. Why don't you come?"

"Sha'n't be ten minutes now," answered the rescue men.

They dug. The light failed. The fact had to be faced that it would be necessary to work on during another night; and, not for ten minutes, but for several hours, as far as could be judged. Miss Lee kept up an intermittent, usually inarticulate, wail, like an animal.

The squad leader sent for a big tarpaulin from the rescue lorry. This he had stretched, like a sort of rough tent, over the mouth of the tunnel so that torches could be used . . . Before long George, the rescue man who had forced his way farthest in, called back, "I can touch her hand now." "All right," said one of the stretcher bearers (he was a Corporal, and in charge of the party), "the doctor says she can have this morphia tablet." They passed down the tiny tablet. "Can you take this in your hand, Miss?" George said. Ford could not hear the answer. But George said, "She's got it."

The tarpaulin made a little, private torch-lit world of their own, cut off from the rain-soaked, gun-thudding, bomber-droning, world outside. They felt safer.

They worked on. It was seven o'clock. Miss Lee had been buried just twenty-four hours. "I can see her head now," George said. Then, after a bit, the other rescue man said, "That ain't her head—that's her arse. She's lying this way."

"No, she isn't. She's in an S-curve, this way. Aren't you, Miss?" said George, appealing to the patient to settle this argument as to her anatomy. Ford couldn't hear the reply. But it was clear that as the rescue men got nearer and nearer, so that she could hear them properly and even probably see them by now, she was getting calmer. She had stopped wailing, and was quiet except for an occasional sob.

They dug. Ford began to hear Miss Lee's voice much more clearly. She was saying something about a dog. "Right across my knees," she said. They had evidently got much closer to her now. After a bit Ford bent forward, craning over the back of the stretcher-bearer corporal in front of him to have a look down the length of the tunnel. To his astonishment he found that George and his mate had now cut their way right through to her. For there she was.

Miss Lee sat facing him, in a tiny torch-lit cave, clear of the debris from her waist up. But her legs and the lower part of her body were still deeply covered by something. She looked to be a slight woman in her early forties, her face and hair covered with the greyish debris. She was perfectly calm now, comforted by the actual presence of her rescuers. She sat there contentedly and innocently, like a dishevelled child sitting up in bed in its night nursery. George, by lying full length, could get at the debris on her right side; he was slowly filling a basket with it. She went on talking about this dog. "Scratched for me, he did," she said. "As soon as the first lot came down on me, I heard him scratching for me and barking. And then the second lot came down, much more heavy, and killed him, right across my legs."

Ford began to realise that she was explaining that the body of this dog was across her legs now: that its body was part of what was holding her legs down. "Saved your legs, lying soft on 'em like that," George said to her.

"Now let's see if we can shift him." Ford couldn't see what George was doing. But he heard him grunt as he tried to move something heavy. Then Miss Lee cried out, "Oh, my legs!" "All right, Sister, all right. Bound to hurt a bit as we shift him off." But evidently they couldn't get at the dog's body. For in a minute they called for a rope. One was fetched by the unseen hands from outside and passed to Ford under the end of the tarpaulin. They gave it to George. He took some time passing it under the dog's body, as Miss Lee cried out whenever the weight on her legs was shifted.

But she was perfectly calm and rational now. She went on talking to them as they worked. "I know I'll never have the use of my legs again," she said, her voice pleading for reassurance. "Oh yes, you will, Sister," George told her. "In ten minutes" (it was always ten minutes) "when we gets you out, you'll find the use of them legs coming back to you prompt. That poor beast's body has saved them legs of yours."

Miss Lee said, "I'm a seamstress. Work for Halliday and Knight. Don't use power machines in our shop. All treadle machines. Wouldn't think a big firm like them would have treadle machines, would you? Old-fashioned."

"You'll be all right," said George. He had got the rope fixed under the dog. "Now, Miss, we're going to lift this dog off of your legs. May hurt a bit as the blood comes back into 'em." He turned to the rest of them—"Now heave." They all pulled on the rope and Ford felt it slowly coming. Gradually a darkness was pulled back through the tunnel; it was deposited on to Ford's knees, as the last man in the line. It was the heavy, soft, black body of a very large Labrador retriever. Ford had considerable difficulty in lifting it and passing it out from under the tarpaulin. But in the end the hands from outside got hold of it, and the body was taken away.

There was now enough space in the actual cave in which Miss Lee sat for George to get down into it beside her. He and she sat there quite peacefully together; she, reassured and happy now that she was in actual physical contact with another human being; he, carefully and gently digging round her legs so as to free them. The conversation went on, Miss Lee talking gently about her life and her job; wondering if she'd be long away from work, and would someone at the hospital tell the firm what had happened? George managed to make a good deal of progress towards freeing her right leg, which was nearest to him, though not without causing her sudden sharp pains at intervals. "That's good, Miss, that is," he kept saying, "shows you've got the feeling down your legs."

But he had great difficulty in getting at the debris over her left leg, since to do so he had to reach right over her body. After several not very successful attempts, he said to her, "Could you shift any of it yourself, Miss?" Miss Lee began picking quite strongly with her right hand (her left was slightly injured) at the debris over this leg. Ford remembered what intolerable stuff it was to handle with one's bare hands. He took off his right glove and said, "Here's a glove for her; pass it down." They took it, saying, "Glove coming down," and Miss Lee put it on her right hand.

By this time George had got her right leg free and was able to lean over more easily and help her with the left leg. After about another fifteen minutes' work, he announced that this leg, too, was coming free. The corporal of stretcher bearers called out to his men outside the tarpaulin, "Ready for the doctor." "Doctor coming down," they answered, and almost at once the end of the tarpaulin was lifted and the trim, mackintoshed figure of the doctor appeared. "Doctor coming down; all out for the doctor," ordered the corporal. The doctor made his way down, guided by the hands of the men, and, not

without difficulty, reached Miss Lee, taking the place George had left. He began speaking gently and firmly to her. She was scared as he began to examine her legs. "They're broken, doctor, I know they're broken," she said. "No, no, I don't think they are at all. Let's just see, let's just see." After carefully feeling each leg, he asked for a splint and two triangular bandages. These were passed down to him, and he bandaged her right leg to the splint. "That's all we need do here, Miss Lee," he said. "Now you're coming out," and he wormed his way back down the tunnel.

Ford did not quite see how she was to be got out, though. It was clearly impossible to get a stretcher down that narrow, irregular length of tunnel, still less into the cave. But the corporal called back to his men, "Fetch the Neal Robertson." In a little while two stretcher bearers appeared with a curious looking white object. They put it down near the entrance to the tunnel. The tarpaulin was now rolled back, and they worked for a time with unscreened torches. Fortunately it didn't sound as if there were any German 'planes particularly near overhead. The white object was unwrapped; it was like an enormous pair of stays, only this stretched the full length of the body. It was made of white, tough canvas, reinforced with struts which were either light metal or some pliant wood such as ash. The whole thing bent and rolled up into almost any shape. This ingenious device was passed down the sloping tunnel. George was at his old place beside Miss Lee in the cave. Gently and expertly they slid the Neal Robertson stretcher under her—she was able to help quite considerably herself, by rolling on to it. Once on, they carried straps, with which the sides of the stretcher were fitted, across her body, and strapped her firmly on. Then they began the still by no means easy process of working the laden stretcher back through the tunnel. Miss Lee must have been quite a light woman, but it is amazingly difficult to get enough purchase to lift any inert body when one is working in a confined space. However, little by little, and without, as far as they could judge, hurting her, they got the stretcher backed out of the tunnel. Once it was clear they lifted it and Miss Lee together on to an ordinary stretcher. Meanwhile the waiting ambulance was backed close up to the mound. It was just nine o'clock. Miss Lee had been buried twenty-six hours.

While they were doing this Ford came close to the stretcher, and looked down at Miss Lee. She was lying there very still, but seemed calm and unshocked. He saw that his glove was still on her right hand. He bent down and slipped it off. She took no notice. It was really a perfectly sensible thing to do; the glove could not possibly have been of any further use to her. And yet afterwards Ford couldn't help feeling that he had been mean in taking it back. It was rather too careful a thing to do, in the circumstances. But Ford had always particularly hated losing one glove of a pair, as he not infrequently did. So that even after twenty-six hours of the James Street incident the impulse to prevent that occurring was still strong in him. Of all that happened during this long incident this lending and recovery of his glove stuck most obstinately in his mind.

The stretcher party picked Miss Lee up, put her in the ambulance and drove off with her. Ford went up to the doctor and asked him whether she had been badly injured. "Not at all, not at all," he said. "So far as I could ascertain—from the very superficial examination that was all that was possible down there—there is no grave physical injury. No limb is broken and there appears to be nothing else seriously the matter with her." Ford and the other wardens felt elation. There was triumph in the wresting of Miss Lee, without injury, and after twenty-six hours' work, from the chaos of the ton bomb. There was triumph in the stubborn digging of the rescue squads, in the use of such a well-designed device as the Neal Robertson stretcher by the stretcher bearers, and, for that matter, in their own efforts. Ford went off duty and slept.

JOHN STRACHEY

HARMONY, 1941

As once the lightnings of the Lord
  Shattered the Cities of the Plain,
On London through the darkness poured
  Shrieking death and burning rain.

With cap for coppers at his feet,
  A fiddler fiddles to bomb and shell,
Calm on the kerb of Oxford Street
  As Orpheus in the streets of Hell.

F. L. LUCAS

WATER-COLOURS ANCIENT AND MODERN

THE agreeable show of water-colour drawings at Agnew's is divided between ancients and moderns; and it must be admitted the ancients have the best of it. Partly this is because the moderns are not very well represented; of our best living artists only three or four contribute, and they contribute meagrely. But there is another and more interesting reason: modern artists, as a rule though by no means always, use the lighter mediums for making notes, to themselves most valuable, which only occasionally do they elaborate and organise sufficiently to render them acceptable to others. Now the ancients—and by "ancients" I do not mean Claude and Poussin whose practice came nearer that of our contemporaries, but the school which flourished in England round about the year 1800—regarded water-colour drawings as ends in themselves; wherefore they elaborated their impressions and loaded every rift with as much ore as it would carry, and sometimes with a little more. For instance, Turner's fine and very large *Reichenbach*, in this exhibition, may well be thought over-loaded. A critic may fairly ask why he did not treat the subject in oils. It would be extraordinarily interesting to know the answer. Possibly in 1804 the artist judged that he was not sufficiently master of the medium to render in oils all the complexities and delicacies which he felt and has rendered in washes. Be that as it may, it is a noble work, to which there is nothing comparable, not only in quality but in intention, in the next, the modern, room; and as much may be said of Cotman's *Church* and Girtin's lovely *Rainbow*.

Of the moderns by far the most satisfying, an artist using the modern technique and handling chalk and gouache as Renoir might have handled them, is Claude Rogers. This good painter, who established his claim to a place in the front rank about a year ago at the Leicester Galleries, here confirms the most favourable opinions then formed. I hardly know whether Steer is to be reckoned modern, happily he is at all events living, and his two contributions—especially *Montreuil-sur-Mer*—are extremely pretty: there criticism and comment end. As usual H. E. Du Plessis makes one regret that he cannot devote all his time to the art for which he is eminently gifted. Another good artist, Paul Nash, is unfortunately not seen at his best. And Gilbert Spencer, when he must give over being priest or prophet and try to be a painter, is clearly at a disadvantage. But let anyone who still doubts my original statement, that the ancients have the best of it, make this experiment: let him spend an hour amongst the Cotmans and Turners, the Girtins and de Wints, surprising here a passage of unexpected quality, there an overlooked manifestation of sensibility, and he will not be bored; then let him try a fair half-hour in the next room.

Not far from Bond Street, at the Leicester Galleries to be exact, is showing a collection of water-colours by a modern artist who used the medium as seriously and elaborately as any of those who lived a hundred and forty years ago. This is Paul Klee. It is true that about a third of the forty-odd works exhibited are in oil; but the use of oil-paint adds nothing to his range and register and has no bearing on his peculiar task of subtle and sometimes agonised self-expression. Essentially he is a craftsman in water-colour, gouache, pen and wash, who renders his sense of delight, despair or surprise in curiously subtle combinations of tone and contrasts of colour, and in line which, if sometimes affected, is never common. Unluckily, he does try on occasions to deal in emotions and ideas which cannot be rendered by these means. He is not half German for nothing, and his art is not untainted with *expressionismus*. This is the more to be regretted because, without any of this adscititious and embarrassing surplusage, his pictures are generally packed with the proper stuff of art; and one has only to compare them with the amusing productions of Miró to realise the difference between an abstract artist and a tasteful decorator. The fact that some of them figured in the famous, or infamous, exhibition of decadents is irrelevant, since that show was a mere political gesture which throws no light on aesthetic opinion. What is perhaps just worth recalling is that, about the year 1910 when first I saw and admired Klee's work, it was being execrated by all Respectability as the insolence of a charlatan or the blathering of a booby, while twenty years later I heard it extolled—and not only in Germany—as the magnificent and awe-inspiring expression of a master mind. Needless to say, Klee is neither a charlatan nor a giant. He is a charming artist; and his pictures at the Leicester Galleries shine like a good deed in a naughty world.

CLIVE BELL

THE MOVIES

"Yellow Caesar," at the New Gallery (Sunday)
"America Speaks Her Mind," March of Time. No. 11
"Dai Jones," at the Empire
"The Prime Minister," at the Regal

Hitler and Mussolini enjoy very different roles on the screen as they do in life. The one (despite Chaplin) is still a bogy-man whose appearance in newsreels evokes a hush interrupted by mild hissing; the other has come into his own as a comedian. Past threats are quickly forgotten. Egyptian ministers no longer fall dead in the middle of reading their speeches. The face that dazzled Cliveden and split the League of Nations, is now a signal for raspberries, and in providing a basketful of raspberries *Yellow Caesar* complies with the mood of audiences. Is Mussolini funnier than Jack Oakie? That was one question facing Cavalcanti when he began to make this film two months ago. The answer, drawn from newsreels, is Musso wearing a silk hat too large for him, Musso showing his hairy chest, Musso on a balcony licking his chops over future conquests. In case the joke seems too easy, we are reminded, gently, that Mussolini's stock stood pretty high in some circles (he was the "great Christian gentleman" of the early 'thirties), and Mr. Douglas Byng makes a momentary appearance as a prim English lady commending trains that run to time. Later in the film, Mr. Churchill's voice weighs in with an inspired Anglicism from his last speech; "the Deucey" seems the perfect title for this villain of melodrama.

But *Yellow Caesar* isn't only a guying of Mussolini. Side by side with the life-story of a dictator, we are shown the price paid in blood for each gesture. From time to time a woman announcer in a studio urges Italian mothers to "greater sacrifices"; the bull-frog swells, and an Abyssinian village falls in flames; the scenes of Tuscan peasants singing in the fields give way to Guadalajara, Libya. A ferocious commentary links satire and sympathy for a misled people. *Yellow Caesar*, despite the skill of Cavalcanti and Brunel, may seem crude to some palates, but it takes up a popular joke and, as it were, defines it. This is the exact opposite of the undiscriminating facetiousness that sometimes disfigures our newsreels. I remember at the beginning of the African campaign seeing a fade-out of dead Italian soldiers round an abandoned tank, while the voice of the announcer chimed in ". . . and now, good-bye to sunny Libya."

The new March of Time is devoted, in rather different terms, to Hitler and the growing American awareness of Hitlerism. The sensational Voice here ushers in events as sensational. Besides being the expected summary of European deliquescence, *America Speaks Her Mind* contains also the biggest news scoop of the year. This is a series of pictures taken by the Nazis themselves, of bombing over England, the big Berthas in action on the French coast, gangs of Polish forced labour, Paris during the occupation, and damage done to oil-plants and railways by the R.A.F. There is a desolating sequence showing an empty Paris, children waiting in a soup queue, Göring waddling from his car into the Ritz, Hitler as a man of destiny looking up at the Eiffel Tower and sightseeing in the Madeleine. These pictures, part of a new Blitz-film, have acquired an unexpected setting in American hands (how they got there, by the way, would make a story in itself), and scenes meant to terrify neutrals have been adroitly turned to stiffening democratic morale.

Another good piece of film journalism this week is the Ministry of Information's *Dai Jones*. An unemployed Welsh miner who has come to London during the Blitz halts in a street where a rescue squad are digging for a boy buried under a bombed house. The miner bores his way under wreckage, and brings the boy out to safety. Every detail of this incident is tensely and simply shown, with an emotion which never topples over. Particularly effective are the Welsh voices of the miner himself and of the commentator.

The Prime Minister is a biography of Disraeli, with Mr. Gielgud in the chief part. We may enjoy Mr. Gielgud's performance—indeed, it would be hard not to—we may applaud the enterprise which has reclaimed one figure from the Arliss waxworks, and yet—. Like all screen biographies *The Prime Minister* is inaccurate; my objection is not to inaccuracy as such, but to the fact that here no advantage has been taken of inaccuracy. Dizzy married for money an energetic, rather silly woman fifteen years older than himself; the Mrs. Wyndham Lewis of the film is handed back her fifteen years, and intervenes in her husband's politics with a statesman's touch. And instead of stepping on the scene "pretty, and a flirt" (Dizzy's description after their first few meetings), Miss Diana Wynyard gives us a glazen beauty, who would never overstep propriety. This kind of distortion seems to me more serious than the other inventions in the film, because it has the opposite effect of real inventiveness; it smooths corners, it gives character a face-lift, and this (one suspects) is what every historical film secretly aims at. The streamlining of personality and incident is accompanied, of course, by an exaggerated make-up as the characters grow old, and though Mr. Gielgud survives the onset of grease-paint, Miss Wynyard and Miss Fay Compton (as Queen Victoria) are made to look at times very odd. Mr. Gielgud provides, within the limits set by celluloid convention, a striking performance: his finicking and impassioned gestures, restless melancholy, and incisive bitter speech combine to suggest the theatrical Jew and the statesman of Empire. The scenes in the House, especially, allow Mr. Gielgud to assert his voice and presence. Without him *The Prime Minister* would be slow going, and it doesn't speed as it is.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Measure for Measure." The Marlowe Society at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge

Infinite compassion for human weakness, for bawdy gossips, tortured moralists and sinful neurotics is as much morality as one need extract from *Measure for Measure*. It is a most difficult play to produce; the last two acts shade off into a series of dénouements in the manner of the *Merchant of Venice*, and without the skill or the sensibility which the Marlowe Society's producer displayed it might turn out a crude affair of weighing honest coarseness against hypocritical justice. To make it more than this the producer had, as well, two excellent traditions of the Marlowe Society to work with, acting on a very competent amateur level and leaving the poetry to speak itself without distractions. Both Angelo, self-possessed, calm, forceful, and Pompey, an experienced broad comic, were well above the amateur level. The Duke acted most intelligently and carried off the difficulties of the last act with great skill; Isabella was sincere and moving; the comics were thoroughly enjoyable. Above all, the company realised that the dramatic quality of the play lies in the poetic impression which the lines make on the audience. To re-emphasise this poetic value against the pictorial intrusions in professional performances is the special contribution which we may expect from a University Society; and in giving it they provided us with a moving and exciting experience.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, March 15th—
"Mass in B Minor," Goldsmith's Choral Union and London Philharmonic Orchestra, Queen's Hall, 2.15.
Prof. J. R. Marrack: "Nutrition in Wartime," Conway Hall, 2.30.
Hans Eisler Concert, Free German League of Culture, 36 Upper Park Road, N.W.3, 3.45.

SUNDAY, March 16th—
K. B. Smellie: "Social Philosophy," 17 Manchester Street, W.1, 11.
J. McCabe: "Changing Human Nature," Conway Hall, 11.
Tchaikovsky Concert, Otto Kertesz (Violin), Austrian Centre, 126 Westbourne Terrace, W.2, 11.45.
Heinrich Fraenkel: "Germans v. Nazis," 153 Finchley Road, 2.45.

MONDAY, March 17th—
Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch, R. M. Campbell: "What is Happening in New Zealand," 12, Gt. Newport St., 1.
N.C.C.L. Public Meeting on Freedom of Opinion and the B.B.C., Conway Hall, 6. Speakers: E. M. Forster, Michael Redgrave, Beatrix Lehmann, Cyril Cardew, etc.

TUESDAY, March 18th—
I. Murray Leslie: "The Building Industry After the War," Housing Centre, 1.
E. M. Forster: "Indian Novelists Writing in English," Warburg Institute, 3.30.

WEDNESDAY, March 19th—
Fabian Lunch, H.E. the Chinese Ambassador will speak on the Present Position of China, Royal Hotel, 1. Tickets 3s.
Prof. Gilbert Murray: "Hellenism and Our Present Cause," Royal Society of Arts, 1.45.

THURSDAY, March 20th—
The Margaret Ashton Memorial Lecture, Mrs. Mary Stocks: "The Victorians," The University, Manchester, 5.
Mozart, Schumann, Chopin Recital by Marguerite Wolff, St. George's Church, Bloomsbury, 6.

Correspondence

NEW OPPOSITION

SIR,—The immediate concern of most Socialists is to win the war as expediently as possible and to win it in such a way that a peace settlement is ensured which will prevent the catastrophe of war from falling on future generations.

Socialists believe that the war effort could be made more efficient than at the moment and the failure of the coalition Government to introduce this efficiency can largely be ascribed to the lack of effective, constructive opposition throughout the country, and particularly to this lack in the House of Commons. The idea of the formation of a new Opposition in the House is becoming more prevalent, as a Parliamentary correspondent pointed out in your columns last week. This seems a necessity if the needs of a nation at war are to be realised by the Government and put into effective action. Muddle could be brought to light before the war effort had been seriously handicapped. The House would, more truly, represent the people.

An essential part of such an Opposition must surely be the contesting of by-elections by candidates who fully support the war effort but believe that the Socialist method is infinitely preferable to the existing method in the conduct of the war. It is impossible in a letter to go into details of such a programme, but a basis could be found in schemes such as that due to Laski. By-elections would serve as a test of public opinion, would arouse interest throughout the country in the two methods of winning this war, and would form a basis for a programme of activity which is at present lacking in the Socialist Movement.

The Labour Party as a partner in the Government could hardly be expected to contest these seats, and the task would fall to Independent Socialist candidates who would have (I hope) the support of the local Labour Party, Trades Council, etc. Transport House should have the sense to realise that it would be folly to ban local parties from participation. Local parties who at the moment allow the activities of

National Leaders to be a substitute for local activity would derive new life from a series of electioneering campaigns.

This suggestion can be carried out almost immediately. Government M.P.s have a habit of dying or being raised to the Peerage. Already since the war began new faces have appeared in the House to the extent of 10 per cent. of members. Some of these have been acquisitions to the country, but on the whole the war effort has hardly been helped by the inclusion of these Members without (necessarily) the support of the constituents.

Cambridge. GLYN ENGLAND

THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

SIR,—As one who has recently been discharged from the Army, after seven months in the Pioneer Corps, I have been greatly interested by the correspondence in these columns concerning the political prejudices of the Military Authorities and the attitude of the ranks. It would appear that while your correspondent "Conscript" is afflicted with the pessimism of the unsuccessful, "Socialist Subaltern" is flushed with the optimism of success.

To describe the attitude of the War Office as "genuinely sympathetic to new ideas" and to say that the authorities are "trying hard" to make the Army more intelligent and more democratic in spirit is, at least, an exaggeration. It may be unwise to generalise upon experience in a single unit, but it is significant that when an attempt was made by a few of us in my company to organise a study group, our otherwise very sympathetic commanding officer warned us that political topics might only be introduced by speakers drawn from the A.E.C.; presumably free political discussion might give the opportunity for the expression of subversive opinions.

On the other hand, it must be remembered that reactionary views are not the perquisite of the War Office and of the officer class. Many of those in the ranks may have been "sturdy Unionists" well versed in bread-and-butter politics, but very few have any conception of "a society based on truth and love" or of any society other than the *status quo*. I heard little comment by the rank and file on the suppression of the *Daily Worker*, but that which was made was usually in favour of what was taken to be resolute action on the part of the Government.

The only criticism was made by those who might be termed middle-class intellectuals who had some concern for the principle of free speech and for the freedom of the press. It is from such men as these that new officers are drawn and it is very unlikely that they will lose their political convictions on being raised to commissioned rank. Whatever the attitude of the War Office, whatever the attitude of the majority in the ranks, it is certain that some of the real leaders of the Army have more than a passive interest in Socialism. EX-PIONEER

SIR,—Mr. W. E. Williams' interesting and timely article on "Education in the Army," which appears in your issue of March 1st, makes a gallant effort to disentangle the confused and muddled conception held by the majority of people of the efforts of the A.E.C. Many Units have, admittedly, been able to make little progress in providing educational facilities for their men—sometimes because the O.C. is unsympathetic and inspires no effort—but more often because Units vary tremendously in their composition. Until a few days ago, I was, and had been for some months, Unit Education Officer in a Unit of 450 men. Over 90 per cent. were not interested in courses, specialised study, nor attending classes. About 75 per cent. were not interested in lectures on special subjects, necessarily a little confined and full of minor detail. But almost unanimous interest—I might truthfully call it enthusiasm—was shown in weekly news talks. At the end of each week, usually on Sunday after lunch, with a map of the world as my sole "prop," I traced the news of the preceding week, trying to pick out and explain those events which might in years to come help to compose the history of our times—the history which their children would learn at school. Movements in the war situation, international developments, the passing of any prominent figures, the system behind any particular aspect of our war effort, the Empire's contribution, and so on. The talks were voluntary and everybody came. The reason, I think, was that the majority of the men in peacetime were not specialists—they were lorry drivers, milk roundsmen, postmen, butchers, tradesmen of one kind or another, or regular soldiers. They were qualified in their trades and further education meant nothing but an interpretation of what they were fighting for—a simple explanation of the panorama of events, seemed something real and their minds received this disguised "education" with genuine appetites.

In my new Unit I expect similar results. My exhortation to any fellow Unit Education Officer is: find out how many men want classes or special lectures and cater for them through the prescribed channels (A.E.9), but having found "the one" don't fail to return to the "ninety and nine." Vary your prescription according to your patients' needs and you will marvel at the results. "UNEDOR"

ALBANIA

SIR,—May an Albanian express his deep gratitude to Mr. F. L. Kerran for his admirable letter on the Albanian question in your issue of March 8th.

As I happen to be in touch with Albanian groups in various parts of the world, I have a pretty good idea of their views and feelings on the subject; therefore, I can say without any hesitation that he has summed up their perplexities and hopes in a striking manner.

To all countries whose freedom and independence have been crushed by the totalitarian powers, Great Britain has promised that democratic victory will see these blessings restored to them. They have been given hope and a vision of the future. This vision and hope have been denied to the Albanians, who were one of the first victims of Fascist aggression. They are bombed and killed on all sides, and are made to endure it all in a limbo of hopelessness. One reads in the Press of the Dutch, Norwegians, etc., being "thrilled" by the bombing visits they get from the R.A.F. One quite understands this: those bombs, with all the misery they may bring in their trail, help to shorten their sentence of penal servitude. Why should not the bombed Albanians be given the opportunity to experience this "thrill"? Can one imagine a more sorry plight or a state of blacker despair than that in which peasants with a passion for freedom in their blood, and young people educated in the schools and universities of democratic Europe find themselves in Albania to-day? Hunted down, imprisoned, plundered and conscripted by the Italians; their homes, villages, towns and ports bombed continuously by three different air forces; and, on top of all, their future neglected by the Allies who have held out a hope for every other oppressed nation in the world.

Those who may at times feel that Albanians are not doing enough to make life difficult for the Italians, and people who are eager to get them to launch a revolt on a large scale, might well ponder over these things before jumping to hasty conclusions. For, after all, it is only human that people who are expected to make the supreme sacrifice should be promised a better lot in life for themselves and their children than the one that is theirs now. Clearly, the prospect of a *similar* lot is no incentive at all—it has to be a better one unmistakably.

Albanians feel that they deserve a little more consideration than they are actually getting at the moment, and on the following grounds. They did everything in their power to resist the Italians during the invasion on Good Friday, when nobody lifted a finger to assist them. Their King and Government refused to be made prisoners of the aggressor and fled the country. During the last two years they have maintained a ceaseless passive and active resistance against an overwhelmingly superior enemy.

What, then, do Albanians want? In the first place, a formal declaration by the British Government that their national independence shall be restored when victory is achieved. Secondly, the recognition of an Albanian provisional Government made up of well-known and respected Albanian politicians. Several of these are now in England, Turkey, Jugoslavia, U.S.A. The news of this recognition, broadcast to the Albanians and showered on them in leaflets by the R.A.F., would have a most heartening effect. It would also counteract the dangerous and mischievous claim, which is being repeated *ad nauseam* by Italian propaganda, that Greece has imperialistic ambitions in Albania. ILLYRICUS

FIRST CLASS

SIR,—At a recent meeting of the Borough Council on which I serve, we interviewed candidates for the position of staff nurse in our Maternity Home. During the course of the interviews the fact emerged that one of the candidates had travelled all night after a hard day's work and had been compelled to stand all night in the corridor of the train throughout the journey. Meanwhile the majority of the first-class compartments were half empty. This feature of travelling in wartime, which gravely affects both soldiers and war workers of every type, is surely something the railway companies can instruct their officials to remedy. If they cannot, for reasons of revenue, take the heroic step of the L.P.T.B. and abolish the distinction between classes at least on crowded trains doing a night journey, they might allow the occupation of empty first-class seats by passengers. The nurse to whom I have referred was not unnaturally both distressed and fatigued by what was practically a thirty-six hour shift without rest. I might add that we have engaged her and she will have to repeat the journey in a week's time from West Hartlepool. I only hope she will not have the same unpleasant experience.

FRIDA LASKI

FREEDOM AT CAMBRIDGE

TWO VIEWS

SIR,—The letter from Mr. Lyth, President of the Undergraduate Council, which appeared in your issue of February 22nd, is misleading: for example, he writes, "practically every undergraduate society is affiliated" to the Undergraduate Council. There must be many dozens of such societies which are not affiliated.

Mr. Lyth labours to give the impression that the Proctors were unreasonable in refusing permission for the Pritt meeting. The whole story would give a quite different impression. It is a long story, and anyone interested will find the details in Mr. Rich's letter to the *Cambridge Review* of February 28th.

Mr. Lyth refers to "organised and continuous interruption from groups of young athletes with more energy than understanding": there is no evidence that interrupters were athletic. Neither is it true that interruption was continuous. The speeches made by the Secretary of the Union Society, the Secretary of the Undergraduate Council, and the Representative of the Socialist Club were interrupted, as was that of the Secretary of the Liberal Club. The first three of these speakers are well known for their support of Marxist doctrine, and for their attitude towards the war, an attitude with which the Labour Party would disagree as heartily as does the Conservative. The Liberal speaker does not possess a good speaking voice, and he caused more amusement than dissension.

If this new wartime Edict is passed by the Senate, it is only public meetings in the town that will have to receive proctorial permission. Proctors have no authority in the colleges, so that public meetings can be held there without their sanction, as of course can private meetings, limited to members of a society, in the town. If the Proctors give permission for a meeting they are responsible for its good order. If they cannot be assured that good order can be kept, they are surely justified in withholding permission.

Most undergraduates understand well that academic authority is the safeguard of their liberties, and have a pretty accurate appreciation of the sort of propaganda exemplified, strikingly if not surprisingly, by Mr. Lyth's letter which you printed.

M. L. GRAEME,
Vice-President,
Cambridge University Conservative Association

SIR,—On January 28th the Proctorial Syndicate of Cambridge University issued a recommendation that, in the period of the present emergency, every University club wishing to hold a public meeting should be compelled to obtain permission from the Junior Proctor and to give at least six days' notice of such a meeting. In the preamble to this request for the power to ban meetings the Proctorial Syndicate advanced the following reasons: "In the interests of the public peace and to lessen the risk of members of the University becoming involved in breaches of the law."

An open meeting called by the Cambridge University Undergraduate Council, to which practically every undergraduate society is affiliated, had passed a resolution by 459 to 158 asking the authorities not to use organised hooliganism as an excuse for limiting discussion and controversial issues, and "to use their powers to check rioting

rather than prevent meetings," also requesting that "Cambridge students should have equality before the law with other citizens."

On February 18th a meeting of the University Senate was held, and graduate members of the University had an opportunity of discussing the proposals of the Proctorial Syndicate. One opposed the suggested new powers on the grounds, among others, that the Proctors are not responsible officers, and it is difficult for senior members of the University to obtain an explanation of their conduct. Another senior member, also opposing, said: "The world is watching rather closely what is being done now in this University, which stands throughout all countries as the home of free thinking and free expression of thought." The Senior Proctor, defending the proposed changes, said that the Proctors wanted chiefly to "guard against the deliberate misrepresentation of University matters in the cheaper press."

Last week-end the Undergraduate Council organised a ballot for all undergraduate members of the University, and over 50 per cent. took the opportunity of recording their opinion. 604 supported and 878 opposed the recommendation that the Proctors should have the power to ban public meetings. The recommendation has yet to be ratified by the University Senate.

Issued by the C.U. Undergraduate Council.

President: H. B. DUNKERLEY

THE FUTURE OF ABYSSINIA

SIR,—The writer of your recent article on "The Future of Abyssinia" was well answered by Professor Jevons on certain points, but there are others the latter did not deal with. May I ask you to permit me to state the actual facts in regard to some important subjects on which the article may well have given a false impression?

The misdeeds of Menelik's troops in the southern provinces have given the Amharic section of the Ethiopian people a bad name; but no one deplores these misdeeds more than the Ethiopians of the younger generation to whom I belong. It would certainly not be right, however, to state that the Amharas were the only ones guilty of misrule. There were outstanding non-Amharic Ethiopians who were not a whit behind the Amharas in exploiting the population; and it made no difference to the governor whether the people he governed were Amharic or Galla. This was at the end of the nineteenth century when animosity was at its height between the inhabitants of the different sections, and there was no mutual sympathy or understanding between the governors and the governed. After Adowa, which saved Ethiopian independence, enlightened men of all sections saw that the salvation of Ethiopia lay in her people holding together and offering a united front to possible intruders.

In 1916 the Emperor Haile Sellassié came to power as Regent determined to make no discrimination between his subjects on racial grounds. When he established modern schools in Addis Ababa he encouraged the rulers of the Galla as well as the Amharic provinces to send boys to the capital to get the benefit of the educational facilities he was providing. At the schools no difference was made between Galla, Amhara, Moslem or Christian. They were all sons of Ethiopia and regarded one another as such. Moreover, Amharas, Gallas and the other races, from the highest to the humblest, intermarried freely. In the years 1916-36 the idea of a master race and subject races practically disappeared. I belong to the Galla race, but I have never experienced any difference between myself and a brother Ethiopian of the Amharic race in any sphere of Ethiopian life.

The writer of the article asks whether the men of Gojjam kept up their rebellion against Italian rule in order to restore "the vanished Shoan Emperor." The answer is being unmistakably given in deeds under our very eyes. The writer also asks: "Will there not be acts of vengeance by the dispossessed against those who accepted office and favour from the Italians?" In reply may I quote the following paragraph from the Emperor's proclamation to his people as soon as he re-entered Ethiopia? "In the name of the gracious God whose mercy does so aid all of us, I now forgive those of you who have worked against the interests of your King and country, being, whether by force or choice, under Italian control." In reply to the writer's question whether destructive Amharic rule was to be re-established with the help of British machine guns in "the vast subject area," the Emperor says in the same proclamation: "A new era has begun when all will be able to serve our beloved Ethiopia in various spheres, and with greater zeal and firmer strength." The word *all* includes the so-called subject peoples, who will take their place in the New Ethiopia as equal partners within the Ethiopian Empire.

As regards slavery, it has long been the constant endeavour of the Emperor and of all right-thinking Ethiopians to stamp it out irrevocably in all its forms. It should be remembered, however, that domestic slavery is an institution as old as Ethiopia herself, deeply rooted in the social and economical structure of the national life, and therefore incapable of abolition by a stroke of the pen. In the liberated Ethiopia to which they are eagerly looking forward there is little doubt that all Ethiopians will do their utmost to do away with an institution which has been an obstacle in their dealings with the outside world. In this, as in everything else, we need the good will and the wholehearted assistance of Britain and those friendly nations who may see their way to come to the succour of a wronged people which is anxious to do right.

EMMANUEL ABRAHAM

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B.B.C. BANS

SIR,—If I were a supporter of the "People's Convention" I should be very grateful to the B.B.C.

Thanks to the idiotic action of the Corporation, tens of thousands of people who would have forgotten all about it have been reminded of the Convention and its ostensible purposes, and informed for the first time that it has the support of some people who are supposed to matter.

Is there a subtle Fifth Column propagandist in control at Broadcasting House? FRED HUGHES

FOOD EXPENDITURE

SIR,—I can give you a few statistics bearing on your question whether the bourgeoisie is spending less on food. The household accounts for this bourgeois family have been kept for the last thirty years and are extant. In the first nine weeks of 1941 the expenditure on food per head has been 3*s.* per week less than it was in 1940 for the same nine weeks. Comparison with 1939 is difficult, since the family is not living in the same place or the same way, and in 1939 there was a resident servant, whereas in 1941 there is none. But I estimate that the reduction in expenditure on food in 1941 as compared with 1939 was almost certainly between 5*s.* and 10*s.* per head per week. In 1916 for the same nine weeks the expenditure on food per person per week was almost half what it is to-day, but in those days the number in the family was larger and it included two resident servants. "Food" in these statistics includes everything bought from a grocer or "store."

ONE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

WAR AGAINST WHAT?

SIR,—I have often thought that the principal reason why many choice and intelligent spirits feel a reluctance to attach themselves to parties of the Left, but only as it were make occasional forced landings on such territory when weather on the Right is particularly thick and foul, is a well-founded conviction that the Left-wing mind has a natural aversion to reality. A good instance is your condemnation with bell, book and candle of Sir Robert Vansittart's pamphlet *Black Record*. On this subject, on which for the future happiness and well-being of the world it is so important to think clearly, I would like to make two points.

First, a question of fact: in your original able criticism of the pamphlet (January 25th) one of the objections made is that Sir Robert's opinions would in due course reach the enemy "whose propagandists could desire no material better suited to their purpose." I should like to know authoritatively whether in fact, up to the time of writing, any such use of them has been made. An ounce of fact is worth a ton of theory, and if the answer is in the negative, as I understand it to be, the fact is surely not without significance as a guide to the way our own propaganda may safely proceed. Secondly, it is well that those who uncompromisingly repudiate these semi-official opinions should realise exactly what beliefs they are themselves committed to. The kernel of Sir Robert's thesis, I take it, is that the lesson of recent history teaches that the German people differs from other civilised peoples of Europe in that the German soul is deeply if unconsciously committed to the belief in their destiny as divinely appointed world rulers, that blind mystically-embraced faith in such a mission is what accounts for the fact that "the Nazis can find a large supply of cold-blooded young barbarians not only to do but to revel in doing things which no Briton could or would do," and that those who think that a "just" and lasting peace can be concluded with such a people before this belief has been irrevocably extirpated and become a derelict dream are innocents living in a fool's paradise whose misguided humanity their descendants will surely rue. I am convinced that to a fair proportion of your readers as well as to an overwhelming proportion of common-sensible common people Sir Robert's thesis is the only one covering the facts of bitter experience and that history will honour and be grateful to him for having courageously spoken the truth.

GEORGE RICHARDS

We have made inquiries about the use made of Sir Robert Vansittart's pamphlet in German propaganda and we are informed that it was exploited by Dr. Göbbels both when Sir Robert's articles appeared in the *Sunday Times* and when the pamphlet was published. Reference is made to this letter in The London Diary this week.—ED. *N. S. & N.*]

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

AFTER his last two books, the one about gun-running in the Caribbean and the other about big-game hunting in Tanganyika, one gave in to the hostile critics of Ernest Hemingway. Once more an American writer who had excited us by the precocity and originality of his gifts, had shown an incapacity to mature. For years Hemingway had carefully presented to us people with no thoughts in their heads; now we saw the end of the process, the empty head bashing itself against a brick wall in a frenzy of misery. Still tough on the surface, his people had become hysterical, sloppy and affected underneath, and the prose had become a manner. And then the Spanish war came. It was fortunate that the war was a Spanish war, for Hemingway, though at his best in war, had also been at his best about Spain; and instead of another visit to that country being a return to the dregs of earlier experience, the war gave him something new, gave him a new kind of intimacy with a people who were peculiarly suited to mature and deepen his type of mind. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (Cape, 9s.) is the product. It is a novel and though marred, I think, by its central love affair, it is the most adult and humane piece of writing he has done.

But before writing about this book, I should say something about the special place Hemingway occupies in the life of the last twenty years. For it is a special place. No other prose writer since Lawrence has had his influence. It lies partly in his manner of writing, which is a sort of stylisation of vernacular speech, but chiefly in his view of life and character. More than any other writer he has defined for us the personality of our own time. Such new definitions arise in every generation, for in every generation, if there has been sufficient chemical disturbance in society, a new kind of man is created and imposes himself on literature, until literature makes his outline clear for all to see—and imitate. I rather think that we have to go as far back as Byron and Byronism before we can find a type which has been stamped as vividly as Hemingway's upon a decade. Less extravagant, yet with a similar and disorientated, inverted or ambiguous romanticism, the Hemingway man, has, at any rate, captivated English-speaking society if it has not spread to the rest of Europe. It comes out above all in the poker-face reporters of the last ten years, their heads full of drink and cynicism, their hearts as sentimental as the hearts of schoolboys. More seriously, the Hemingway man is the tough technician, the average man on his own, a kind of Robinson Crusoe without spiritual life, about whose adventures there is always an aftermath of treachery, disgust, a bruised taste of suicide and death.

What has this to do especially with the last twenty years? Well, it is American, something from the dominant popular culture of the new world which has done more to set free the ordinary man than the last war or its revolutions. But that is only the background. Mr. Wyndham Lewis, in a brilliant essay, defined the Hemingway man, the typical character of his books, as "the dumb ox," or the helpless man in machine society who commands nothing, but "to whom things are done." This is a generalisation which must be applied very lightly. Compared with a character in Proust, for example, the Hemingway man seems, on the contrary, to be, above all, a "doer." He does not ruminate about the past; he lives in the present. He is essentially unreflective, non-sedentary, without judgment. Spiritually in chains, he has great physical freedom. He is a man on his own, who can only act. He cannot think or reflect or understand his position. His emotional responses are limited to what is "fine" or what is "like hell." He is the killer who can only kill and gape at the vacuum afterwards; the "bum" who merely "goes places" and still finds himself; the boxer, the bullfighter, the hunter who faces the blankness of success and takes to women or the bottle to get away from it. The one satisfying thing in the lives of all the Hemingway characters is their technical efficiency. It is the only point on which they are self-critical. Their one fear—making a false judgment of the bull, pulling the trigger too soon, misreading the spoor, choosing the wrong moment to make love, not knowing how to take their drink, lacking "one of the answers." Failure in these respects makes them "feel bad"; otherwise they just "feel good." Undisciplined in everything else they are intensely disciplined by their craft.

To a reflective man who knows how to live in the imagination, who has the leisure to cultivate his sensibility, who abhors violence, who does not wish to talk unless he has something to say, who mistrusts intuition, who is constantly concerned with putting an order on his experience and who, enjoying the freedoms of the mind, dislikes to be a dog wagged by the tail of his instincts, the tough Hemingway man is as boring as Robinson Crusoe would have been to Addison. But the Addisons are at a disadvantage in our kind of world. Urbane, they are fixed and unadaptable. Sedate on the throne of civilisation they can only deplore that every few minutes a piece more of it is washed away. No; what has attracted us to the Hemingway man is his adaptability, the lightness of his luggage, his mobility, the way he has, so to speak, averaged down his demands. To anyone under 45 the natural climate of our lives has been war and a process of de-civilisation which disheartens our elders who have known better, but in which we have got to live out our lives. The Hemingway man has become an expert in de-civilisation. We admire him because he has made terms with his time.

It was Aldous Huxley who first pointed out the element of fake in Hemingway's attitude. An educated man, he was posing as non-educated and joining the general attack on culture. The criticism was well made, and the manner in which Hemingway's work went to pieces fully justified it. In the end Hemingway had simply become sex, guns, booze and sons of bitches. A writer like Malraux, for example, is immeasurably superior to Hemingway in stating the intelligent and sensitive man's reactions to de-civilisation and war. He is also a far better writer on war and violence. But turning now to *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, one can see that Huxley's criticism has been taken. It is not simply that the central character, the American dynamiter, Robert Jordan, is an educated man, which puts the book in the right key, though that is a big change. The point is that Hemingway has found a background of ideas he can respect. In the Spaniards he has discovered a non-thinking, instinctive people outside of our culture, refractory to Western ideas, whose values are fabulous and, ultimately, mystical, and who accept, as European humanism does not, the imminence of death. People who know the passions of action with a greater intensity than any other, the Spaniards know too the reactions from it, the aftermath, and upon what would otherwise be emptiness they have imposed the great ritual of their gravity and their remorse.

The scene of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is laid in the heights of the Guadarrama mountains in the second year of the civil war. This is an inaccessible no-man's-land neglected by either army, and hidden in a cave among the pines are a small guerilla band who from time to time have gone down to blow up the Fascist trains and loot them. The band, led by Pablo, are the relics of a party who had perpetrated a theatrical and awful massacre in their village. Jordan makes contact with them because he has to get their help in the blowing up of a bridge in one of the gorges, an act which is vital to the new Republican offensive. It is an essential part of the Hemingway philosophy that this act shall be futile, for the offensive is already betrayed to the Fascists. One sees a tragedy within a tragedy; that will be a futile doom in any case. The story itself moves elaborately and slowly through the two or three days with which it deals, and it reaches moments of intense drama. First of all Pablo has cold feet. The guerrillero is haunted by an incapacity to repeat the glory of his atrocities in the village. He is drinking hard and vacillating. He will either murder Jordan or betray everyone. Anyway, he realises, his game is up, his power gone. Alternatively Jordan or his band will murder Pablo in self-protection. Then there is a tremendous fight when the Fascists stumble upon a neighbouring guerilla leader; and, lastly, there is the long-drawn-out excitement of the mining of the bridge and the get-away. These, the main episodes, are linked by Jordan's love affair with the girl Maria, a lyrical piece of writing, charming in its rendering of the talk of the lovers, but fatal to the austerity of the narrative. The real tragedy is, after all, not Jordan's, but the maiming of this band of peasants, who are not so much scoundrels as medieval people torn up by the roots and no longer responsible outside the protective pattern of their normal lives. Pablo is a disgusting man, a killer, a sadist, a fat pig-eyed debauchee; yet he has an extraordinary dignity and pathos, the coward's tragic foresight. Pilar, his woman, once the mistress of bull-fighters, is a primitive force; the old man who humbly has devoted his life to the Republic and scrupulously maintains his new atheism against the ever-rising tide of his religious memories, is a most subtle and sympathetic portrait of a good man praying, not to avoid evil, but to be delivered from it; and the gypsy, irresponsible, witty, without conscience, childish, is a brilliant portrait. When the band is voting on the question of killing Pablo, all monotonously and calmly say, "Kill him." Until it comes to the gypsy who says with the childish simplicity of generations of hagglers, "Sell him."

The great quality, as we should expect, is in the talk. We know by now Hemingway's power with the words and accent of dialogue; but here, in his astonishingly real Spanish conversation, he has surpassed anything I have ever seen. Keeping close to the literal Castillian phrase with its Elizabethan nobility, he gets the laconic power of its simple statements and also the terrific rhetoric of its obscenity. The Spanish peasant divides his conversation between the two modes, reaching heights of classical formality, and depths of obscene rage, which have the air of incantation. Mr. Hemingway understands the hierarchy of Spanish blasphemy, the proper place of each rococo phrase. The scene in which Argustin attempts to provoke Pablo is both a fine piece of measured drama and excellent observation of the proper progress from one insult to the next.

The narrative in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is studied and intense. This is partly due to the breaking down of the prose into monosyllables and to the repetitions in people's thoughts and speech. Tedious as this sometimes is, it is an effective way of catching the murmur of life, the sort of sing-song which runs through human affairs. This kind of monologue is very impressive in such passages as when the old peasant is meditating on his dislike of the necessity of killing and his belief that a great act of penitence—"something very strong"—will be needed afterwards, which reads like one of the Psalms. But the outstanding things in the book are not the episodes of the main story at all, in which we are indeed sometimes too

conscious of each individual brick that has gone to make it; but the two stories, short stories they really are, told by Pilar, Pablo's woman. This woman in real life would be a born story-teller, one impelled to relate events as if she were the voice of all human suffering, ambition and fatality. She is, in her way, as formidable as La Celestina, a mixture of Lady Macbeth and the Wife of Bath. She has two stories. One is her account of how the revolution started in the town where she and Pablo were living and how Pablo began his revolutionary career. She describes how one by one the Fascists were taken out of the Town Hall, beaten with flails, and then pitched over a cliff. Horrifying and sickening, the story has nevertheless that theatrical variety of incident, that primitive realism and capacity to catch every emotion that was felt by the people as a whole. It is like a crowd scene from Zola, but without any dubious symbolism written in. Her power as a story-teller is in making the horror human. The second story, from which I will quote a passage, is an account of her life with an earlier lover, a bull fighter, and of the banquet which was held in his honour. This is a wonderful story and Mr. Hemingway has set it in the midst of one of those pedantic Spanish disputes about the man's merits as a torero. She is describing the meal. The head of his last bull is on the wall covered by a cloth and will eventually be unveiled in his honour:

> I was at the table and others were there, Pastora, who is uglier than I am, and the Niña de los Peines, and other gypsies and whores of great category. It was a banquet, small but of great intensity and almost of a violence due to a dispute between Pastora and one of the most significant whores over a question of propriety. I myself was feeling more than happy and I was sitting by Finito and I noticed he would not look up at the bull's head, which was shrouded in a purple cloth as the images of the saints are covered in church during the week of the passion of our former Lord.

And Finito, the bull fighter sits there, smiling at everyone but staring now and then in a horror of fear at the shrouded head of the long horned bull on the wall and murmuring to himself, "No, No, No," and spitting blood into his napkin. He is dying of tuberculosis. Someone tells a story against a former manager, a story unfavourable to gypsies and the gypsy woman Pastora "intervenes":

> I intervened to quiet Pastora and another *Gitana* intervened to quiet me and the din was such that no one could distinguish any words which passed except the one great word whore which roared out above all other words.

But quiet was obtained at last, the speech made, the bull's head unveiled:

> Everyone shouted and applauded, and Finito sank further back in the chair and then everyone was quiet and looking at him and he said, "No, No," and looked at the bull and pulled further back and then he said, "No" very loudly and a big blob of blood came out and he didn't even put up a napkin and it slid down his chin . . . . He looked around at the table and said "No" once more and then he put the napkin up to his mouth and then he just sat there like that and said nothing and the banquet which had started so well and promised to mark an epoch in hilarity and good fellowship was not a success.

I have said little about the brief strictly political part of the book. Jordan is mainly struck by the religious fervour of the Communist rank and file and bewildered, though suspending judgment, by the "realism" he found among the leaders. The thing was, he thought, to win the war. Afterwards he would see. The political portraits are short but they are packed with life, sceptical observation and shrewdness. His Marty is savage. His anarchists are very funny, his Russians very complicated. There is no doubt that, if you cut out Jordan's romance, the Spanish war has restored to Hemingway his seriousness as a writer. V. S. PRITCHETT

RIGHT AND LEFT

Into Battle: War Speeches. By THE RT. HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL. *Cassell.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Churchill's Socialists. By MICHAEL MACALPIN. *Lawrence and Wishart.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

The Betrayal of the Left. Edited by VICTOR GOLLANCZ. *Gollancz.* 9*s.*

The motives of men's actions, such as fear, love, greed, loyalty and the desire to stand high in one's own group, are constant in society, but in stable periods of history the majority of people can go through life without ever confronting the ultimate test of their relative strength. Society canalises ambitions, limits greed, penalises violence and regulates loyalties. At moments of upheaval, in a period of war or revolution, men may suddenly find their loyalties conflicting, they may be physically afraid, they may have to choose between class and country, between self-preservation and dishonour. These are the moments for the dramatist, who is concerned with the quality of human conflict, not with approval or condemnation. Our day provides more Hamlets than a future Shakespeare can ever portray. King Leopold of Belgium, for instance, will offer superb material for the tragedian. The young king in revolt against his father's romantic heroism, anxious to save his country from the horror of war, is played on by interested advisers; he is unable either to prepare for war or to keep out of it, warns his allies in an agony of mental conflict that capitulation cannot be avoided and is used as a scapegoat by Reynaud, and finally left to uphold as best he can the dignity of his people under German occupation. Europe is strewn with such tragedies, and after every disaster of social democracy the defeated leaders find themselves with no occupation except to turn over the agonies of the past, to search their souls, to attempt to fasten the blame and desperately to establish in the world their own reputation as honest men who were betrayed by someone or other. It is a sorry spectacle, these denunciations and self-exculpations; how few Social Democrats, Communists, Liberals or Conservatives admit the basic truth that the forces of Fascism were too strong and that they were defeated, and leave it at that! When Social Democracy fought, as in Austria, its leader Otto Bauer was denounced because he held back; if he had fought earlier would the results have been less disastrous? Has the Communist line brought less calamity anywhere? Spain provides an even better example of terrible dilemmas. One thing that convinces me of Señor Negrin's greatness is that since the victory of Franco he has not, I believe, written a word to justify himself or to incriminate the generals who threw him over and made peace with the enemy.

At such a time as this a man whose loyalties are unhesitating, who has accepted national wars as part of the necessary pattern of life, and who believes in himself as a ruler, has immense advantages over possible competitors. This collection of Mr. Churchill's Speeches begins with his condemnation of the treaty with Eire in May, 1938, which deprived England of the use of the Irish ports; it includes the great speech after Munich, the long series of warnings before the attack on Poland, and the series of exhortations which heartened this country last summer. As one reads these brilliant and carefully prepared pieces of oratory one is impressed with the simplicity of Mr. Churchill's mind. I do not mean that it lacks content; on the contrary it is a cultured, powerful and well-stocked mind. But it is so concentrated on the fight, so oblivious—on the surface at least—of all the moral conflicts and doubts which afflicted most of his contemporaries about whether this or any war could be right; whether our own failures and mistakes have not ruled us out as world leaders, and whether it was right to fight without a better prospect than we had last summer. This certainly is a necessary quality of leadership. I can easily imagine circumstances in which Mr. Churchill's loyalties would conflict, but in a war against the Nazis he has no doubts, and after a winter's bombing his certainty is shared by most other English people. The quality of prophecy, on which much stress is laid in this edition of his speeches, is not in itself remarkable. Hitler told us and showed us what he was doing and innumerable other publicists have been as prophetic as he. Churchill stands out as a prophet because being a British imperialist first and last, he was, therefore, quite sure that we ought not to give up the Irish bases, that Munich was a terrible disaster, even though we were ill-equipped for war, and that we ought to fight on if necessary from Canada. It is the absolute certainty, as well as the robust courage and the genial eloquence of these speeches which make them memorable. This certainty is an invaluable quality in a crisis; the fact that it arises from an outlook that excludes so many underlying features is forgotten for the time.

Labour leaders are in a less happy position. While Mr. Churchill had always been fascinated by war most of them hated it and declared on innumerable occasions that they would never support another. Hitler drove them out of that position, but he could not expel from their minds the knowledge that war is not the simple conflict between nations, that in supporting a Churchill government they were surrendering much of their independence, going back on much that they had said in the past and embarking on an adventure which on all historical precedent was unlikely to bring anything valuable to the working classes whom they represented. In a word, they chose the lesser evil and they have found themselves carried along in the struggle which from a military point of view was indistinguishable from any other war for empire, and they have had to reconcile themselves to this change of front. Naturally, in such a situation it is easy for their enemies to find many inconsistent utterances. The author of *Mr. Churchill's Socialists* is a master at the game of political crosswords. One can see him with his rigid theory of human behaviour and his piles of carefully docketed cuttings, in every case seeking the most damaging explanation. One can select examples from any page. Take the story of Britain's failure to obtain an alliance with the U.S.S.R. I believe myself that such an alliance was obtainable during the Popular Front period and that there was an outside chance even as late as March, 1939, that it might have postponed or even prevented war. But the Communist thesis that Mr. Chamberlain was always scheming for a war against Russia, that even his guarantee to Poland was a subtle way of making war on Russia, is developed in this book in a way which can only strengthen the opponents. Surely the essential facts are not obscure. Geography as well as ideology made the alliance difficult. The central fact of European politics was that every country including Britain and Russia, and excluding Germany, feared war. Mr. Michael MacAlpin never once mentions the desire to escape war, though this was the dominant motive throughout the period. Actually Mr. Chamberlain wanted above everything to keep England out of war, and if Hitler was determined to go to war he would have been glad enough for Hitler to march East rather than West. Therefore British policy, during the last period before the war, dithered between the attempt to prevent war by the alliance pressed on Mr. Chamberlain by public opinion, and the appeasement policy which might, at least for several years, have saved Britain from being involved in war. Stalin played exactly the same game. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that

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after Munich, and certainly after the resignation of M. Litvinov, Stalin had really made up his mind that an alliance with the West was impossible and was determined to drive Hitler West instead of East. His pact with Hitler was a Soviet Munich—and a *riposte* to the British Munich. Stalin succeeded where Mr. Chamberlain failed. Whether two governments as profoundly antipathetic as those of the U.S.S.R. and Britain could have been successful allies is a matter of speculation. The book is full of special pleading. As a small example of Mr. MacAlpin's mind, I may quote his only reference to this journal. Referring to our comment on a Labour Party pamphlet on Finland he says "THE NEW STATESMAN, a hostile critic of Russia, was compelled to describe the pamphlet as 'beneath the notice of adults.'" Compelled? Fairness does not exist in the Communist calendar: to criticise the U.S.S.R., as this journal has often done, is a proof of wickedness: if we criticise its detractors on a particular point we are, for some unexplained reason, "compelled" to do so. In one passage Mr. MacAlpin denounces the British threat of a blockade of Germany on grounds that would be respectable from a pacifist, but which make singular reading from people who deliberately penetrated every peace society and accused every pacifist of being "Objectively Fascist." Does Mr. MacAlpin think that there would have been no blockade, no starvation of women and children, if there had been a British alliance with the U.S.S.R.?

It used to be claimed with some show of truth that Communists had the advantage of a "straight line" which shielded them from the miserable internal conflicts of bourgeoisie Socialists. Stalin's nationalism has undermined that clarity of purpose. Until, and indeed after, the Stalin-Hitler pact the traitors were all those who were prepared under any circumstances to do any kind of deal with Hitler; since the change of line early in the war it has been a proof of treachery either to stand for the war or to advocate a Pétain peace. Ivor Montagu illogically called the book which preceded this one *The Traitor Class*, though on the argument that the Chamberlain policy was dictated by class interests, the policy of appeasement was not treachery but loyalty. This confusion of mind reached its climax in the People's Convention, whose ostensible programme was reasonable enough to attract the support of many unpolitical people who have only since begun to wonder whether there lay behind it the policy of revolutionary defeatism and the acceptance of a Nazi victory. For this reason *The Betrayal of the Left*, with an introduction by Laski, and the text mainly written by Gollancz and Strachey, is published at a peculiarly appropriate time. A careful examination of the policy of the *Daily Worker* has convinced these authors, who were the leaders of the Left Book Club, the most effective Left Wing movement created in this country since the last war, that the Communist Party has now accepted in its entirety Lenin's classical policy of revolutionary defeatism, and that Communists are only following his advice in not showing their full hand at a period when it would be indignantly repudiated. An interesting question arises about the German Communist Party. The article of Ulbricht, which was dealt with in this journal when it appeared, showed that the leader of the German Communist Party was prepared only to criticise Hitler while he regarded Britain as the main enemy of the working class. Thus the line, which had been until a short time ago absolute resistance to the Nazis as the paramount duty, had switched over to placing British and German imperialism on the same footing and then to a further stage in which British imperialism was the real enemy and Hitler the temporary ally of Communism. At one stage the *Daily Worker* conformed to this line. There is a remarkable example of a despatch just before Hitler's invasion of Holland when the *Daily Worker* seems to have taken Nazi guidance; at least it prepared the way for the Nazi invasion of Holland by suggesting that the Germans might be compelled to counter a coming invasion from Britain.

The *Daily Worker's* treatment of Hitler's invasion of Norway and Denmark hid the fact that this was an act of German aggression and put all the blame on Britain. This book, with its careful analysis of Communist policy, will take an important place in the library of Marxian controversy. It will stand the test of time better than most of such books, since Mr. Gollancz and Mr. Strachey, while vigorous enough in attack are elaborately careful to explain that the rank and file of the Communist Party have been deceived, and go out of their way to admit the purity of their intentions in dutifully following the official Party line. The book contains articles that have already appeared in *Left News*, the controversy between Gollancz and Levy that appeared in the correspondence columns of this paper, and concludes with an admirable appeal to Communists by Mr. Gollancz, who reconsiders the story of his collaboration with the Communist Party and explains with unusual candour the difficulties of a sincere Socialist in a period of great doubt and difficulty. This is a book which will help to clear the minds of many who are unhappy and perplexed.

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The Defenders. By FRANZ HOELLERING. Trans., by L. LEWISOHN. *Routledge.* 9*s.*

The Friends of the People. By ALFRED NEUMANN. Translated by COUNTESS NORA WYDENBRUCK. *Hutchinson.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Although history does not repeat itself it is constantly producing situations so alike in general outline that at certain moments one ought to be able to predict, merely by rule of thumb, what the next move will be. Thus in every revolution of the Left one can be sure that sooner or later the moderates will overthrow the extremists and proceed to set up a tyranny of their own, always better, but never very much better, than the original tyranny which the revolution destroyed. The crushing of the Paris Commune, subject of *The Friends of the People*, was an extreme and terrible instance of this. The Third Republic was undoubtedly better than the regime of Napoleon III, but it started its seventy-years existence with one of the bloodiest massacres in modern times, an event which has left curiously little mark on English memories, no doubt because it was chiefly common people who were slaughtered. I know of no English novel dealing with the Commune, and this translation has the fault, from an English point of view, of assuming more knowledge than the average reader would probably have.

Although real people come into the story—Blanqui, Rochefort, Clemenceau and, rather unnecessarily, Verlaine—the novel's central theme is the collision, always sharpest in revolutionary periods, between public and private virtues. Its hero, if that is what he should be called, is a boy of sixteen, Pierre Cagnoncle, a typical Paris urchin, who starts his revolutionary career by shouting "Vive Gambetta!" and proudly chipping the imperial "N" off a shop-front, and ends a few months later as a political spy of the terrible Raoul Rigault, Procurator of the Commune. Pierre is torn all the while between duty and decency. He is idealistically in love with a young woman of the bourgeoisie, older than himself, who has been the mistress of one of the ministers of the imperial regime. It is assumed as a matter of course that she is plotting against the Republic and the Commune, and as soon as Pierre's connection with her is discovered he is set to spy upon her in the meanest possible manner. He is well aware that she is innocent, but he can only protect her by acting semi-treacherously towards his employers. When he dies—by a bullet in the back from one of Thiers's soldiers, who shoot first and ask questions afterwards—he is only beginning to grasp that revolutionary loyalty may mean saying good-bye to common decency and that his hero Rigault is in any ordinary sense of the word a scoundrel.

The author merely states, without trying to solve, the moral dilemma inherent in revolution. Democracy can only defend itself by ceasing to be democratic. Although the Commune did kill a certain number of people and was led by ruthless men who were ready for terrorism and political espionage, it seems if anything to have erred on the side of mildness. It failed to sequestrate the Bank of France and never made proper use of its hostages. In their hopeless situation, with Thiers on one side and the Prussians on the other, its Deputies debated and passed a motion against solitary confinement for political prisoners, because "that is the kind of thing we are fighting against." The Commune did not, however, fail by being over-humane; it could not conceivably have survived in any case, and to all its doings there attaches the same morbid appeal as belongs to a sinking ship or a condemned cell. If one has a working knowledge of the period and the chief personages involved, this book has a touch of tragedy. But for an English reader it suffers from the fact that the political background is too much taken for granted. It is unfortunate, but very few Englishmen know who Felix Pyat was or how Blanqui disagreed with Marx. And the picturesque circumstances of the siege of Paris, with its balloon post and its diet of elephant and rat (brown rats were sold at two francs fifty

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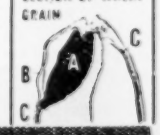

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apiece and black rats for slightly less), though no doubt stale news to a Frenchman, will be made more of if ever an English novel of the Commune is written.

The Defenders, another historical novel, is an abler book than *The Friends of the People*, but it does not attain the same note of detachment. It deals with the destruction of the Austrian Social Democrats in 1934, a thing too recent and controversial to be genuinely tragic. The Commune is just within living memory and is sufficiently a modern event to have been recorded in photographs, but it is also far enough in the past to be thought about without anger. That is not the case with the Vienna massacre of 1934, one of the stupidest as well as one of the meanest outrages in the dirty history of the last ten years. Mr. Hoellering is writing from the point of view of the Social Democrats. By 1934 the Austrian Socialists, who genuinely believed in peaceful evolution and could point to their municipal achievements in support of it, were being systematically goaded into revolt by the Heimwehr and the other forces aiming at a "paternal" dictatorship. Their leaders, who had the usual failings of democratic politicians, had again and again prevented them from resisting. Finally the Government suspended the Constitution, prevented the Chamber from meeting, arrested most of the leading Socialists and brought the Heimwehr to Vienna with the avowed intention of "making a clean job." A few thousand rank-and-file Socialists dug up their buried weapons and fought for several days, not for revolution but simply in defence of the Republic. The ultra-patriotic and Catholic Heimwehr, financed by Mussolini, blew them to pieces with artillery, and in doing so destroyed the one ally they might possibly have had when their own struggle with the Nazis came.

The principal characters in *The Defenders* are a young engineer, an "underground" member of the Social-Democratic party, and a girl of middle-class family, engaged to a baron of the old nobility, with whom he has a brief love affair. The most sympathetic and interesting, however, is an immensely fat orchestral drummer, a man with a sensitive and heroic spirit inside the enormous belly that prevents him from being taken seriously. The baron, a liberal politician and a minor official of the Government, is a more complex character, in reality a casualty of the last war. The horror of the war is never long out of his mind, a thing not grasped by the younger generation, who see him only as self-centred and epicurean. His one desire is to get out of politics and back to his country estate, back to the old feudal life, with the private chapel and the castle vineyard, though he is dimly aware that the Nazis and the Catholic Fascists, no less than the Socialists, are squeezing that kind of life out of existence. As a sort of background to the hopeless struggle of the Socialists there is a café where the disinherited intelligentsia meet, the huge tribe of musicians, writers and lawyers for whom there is no longer any economic basis and who have nothing to do except squabble, make love, cadge drinks and talk of the vanished Vienna of "before the war." All these types Mr. Hoellering is able to treat almost as sympathetically as the Socialists, but that is as far as impartiality can go at this date. No doubt the Nazis, the Heimwehr and the Catholic politicians also had their point of view, but it is too early for anyone who cares about democracy to be able to state it.

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THE RAJ

Our British Empire. By STEPHEN LEACOCK. *Lane.* 7s. 6d.

This book should be read in conjunction with some such work as *Along This Way*, the autobiography of the distinguished negro, James Weldon Johnson, which has just been reproduced in the Penguin series. Afterwards the reader should ask himself the time-honoured question, "Would you like your sister to marry a black man or a professor of political economy?" Professor Leacock, in what his publishers claim is his greatest work, outlines the history and structure, and expatiates upon the strength of the British Empire. A paean of Empire ends with the suggestion that its future lies in close co-operation with the United States, and since the concept of an English-speaking bloc has a considerable importance at the moment it is useful to examine the spirit which informs such a distinguished advocate as Professor Leacock. Our Empire, he believes, not only contains in its destiny the chief hope for universal peace, but the chief opportunity towards that abiding plenty and prosperity on which universal peace can permanently rest. Add, he implies, co-operation and informal union with the United States and an Arcadia bound in triple brass will be achieved. Unfortunately it turns out that the English-speaking peoples, like the two sailors, will have acquired this pub for themselves and there will be no opening time. There are two tests for this—trade and migration.

We need freer trade, says the Professor, and more of it. He then lays down the principle of differential costs as the proper measure of a protective tariff. In the ideal sense this means, as he explains, that a manufacturer is entitled to just as much protection against an outsider as is warranted by the difference in wages and other costs between the two. This, he emphasises, is the ideal sense. On the contrary, it is plain damn nonsense which would effectively put an end to all international trade. If the cost of producing an article is 8 cents in Britain and 10 cents in Canada and a duty of 2 cents is imposed to offset the difference there is no longer any reason or inducement for the Canadian consumer to buy the article produced in Britain. If every country applies the principle there is no advantage left in international exchange. Q.E.D. In this country this is explained gently to students of economics in their first year. Those who grasp the point go on to become worthy but undistinguished citizens: the others become experts at Peace Conferences. An obscure Scot named Adam Smith explained in the eighteenth century that grapes could be grown profitably in the Arctic Circle under this sort of protective tariff, and Professor Leacock can find a copy of his work in the Bodleian and possibly in the British Museum.

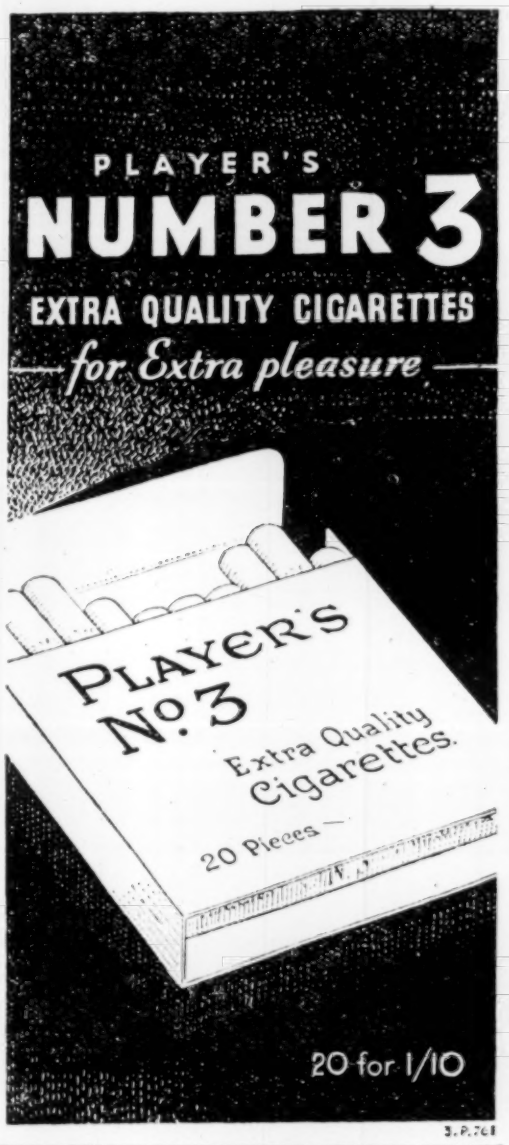
In the case of migration, Professor Leacock has not yet discovered a principle which prevents it altogether but this is not for want of trying. He is prepared to admit the French because he knows they won't come. Scandinavians in any amount because there aren't many of them. For Continental Europe he recommends extreme caution and in some cases exclusion as with bubonic plague. This brings him to the colour line and the bar goes up. For all the Orient the only policy is and must be exclusion. Having presumably trotted across the quad to consult his colleagues in the faculty of science, Professor Leacock is able to propound the following staggering dictum. "The Eastern and Western races cannot unite. Biologists tell us that where they inter-marry their progeny is an ill-joined product, two brains rattling in one skull." Oh God! Oh biology as taught in Montreal! The Professor then becomes regal, "Where we cannot marry, where we cannot worship, where we cannot eat, there we cannot live." Which means that if one of his colleagues were so misguided as to become enamoured of a Chinese lady with 6,000 years of breeding behind her, she would not get an invitation to the Common Room sherry party. (If the sherry is Empire sherry she will be lucky). The higher degree students of McGill must be recruited from a very narrow circle if Professor Leacock has never encountered an Eastern student who by his looks, manner and mind induced some slight doubts about absolute white superiority. However, the Professor will have no "coolies" in the temperate Dominions, but he is prepared, after consultation one hopes, to make concessions at the expense of Australia. In the part of that continent too hot for white labour the settlement of people of a less sensitive race, as free people but under control, might be hazarded. We could not let in people like the Japanese with an imperial power behind them. (They are sensitive people who say it with cruisers.) And then comes a passage which surely could not have been written with the sickening complacency that it has in print. "We might let in the meeker and homeless people—the negroes who have learned humility in centuries of adversity." Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the hot spots of the earth. The trouble about this is that just as the negro has cleaned up the Northern Territory someone will invent a very cheap and efficient air-conditioning plant and there will be an inrush of palefaces to teach the negro where he gets off, namely, the sidewalk. *The negroes who have learned humility in centuries of adversity!* If there is one thing which makes any sensitive white people shudder it is the thought of the moment on the Day of Judgment when the next item on the agenda is "Treatment of Coloured Races." They will shudder still more at the prospect that at this juncture an Emeritus Professor of Political Economy may step forward blithely and explain that slavery, lynching and the Jim Crow car were institutions happily furnished by the white man to enable the negro to achieve a state of grace.

G. L. SCHWARTZ

HOMO SAPIENS?

The Uniqueness of Man. Essays by Julian Huxley. *Chatto and Windus.* 10s. 6d.

Given the title of this book, an acid query goes almost automatically to the head of its review; it is a sign of the times. Professor Huxley himself, writing his preface to these fifteen essays in the basement shelter of the Zoo, with the Holst Quartet playing him Sibelius on the wireless to the punctuation of anti-aircraft fire, is not altogether proof against this mood. And yet most of these pages constitute an energetic protest against its negations. Professor Huxley is too good a biologist and too honest a thinker to erect biology as a standard at this time of the fall and frustration of economic man. Yet if his argument means anything it must be something of a comfort to be a biologist at this time. After all, if Smith and Schmidt are having a terrific set-to behind the gymnasium,



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and even if it is agreed that it would be dangerous to separate them, it is something to remember with cool certainty that last week they were playing together in the school team. It is that which leads more strongly than anything else to the hope that (if they don't land themselves in the infirmary or worse) next week will find them on the same side. Nor is the case radically weakened if it turns out that this reflection comes only from a puny cell gyrating helplessly in the bloodiness of Smith's nose or in the blazing blackness of that hero's eye. It is good for that cell and all his brother cells, it may be ultimately good for Smith himself and Schmidt himself, that this knowledge should not get utterly lost in the dust of the shindy.

Such, roughly, is the underlying argument of this book. Professor Huxley mentions Smith and Schmidt as little as possible (and how refreshing in the din and counter-din of propaganda that silence is!). His eye is fixed on the side on which they and all the other grubby little urchins at the school of life were born and bred to play, and on which, whether they like it or not, they must ultimately play or perish. In the title essay he plots the twisting ascent of man on the vast network of the evolutionary process. Every avenue but one along which the germ plasm was urged in the long experiment of life has turned out to be a cul-de-sac; in one only, that of human development, is the road still open to evolutionary traffic. Professor Huxley's statement of man's uniqueness is elegant and precise:

> The essential character of man as a dominant organism is conceptual thought. And conceptual thought could have arisen only in a multicellular animal, an animal with bilateral symmetry, head and blood system, a vertebrate as against a mollusc or an anthropod, a land vertebrate among vertebrates, a mammal among land vertebrates. Finally, it could have arisen only in a mammalian line which was gregarious, which produced one young at birth instead of several, and which had recently become terrestrial after a long period of arboreal life. There is only one group of animals which fulfils these conditions—a terrestrial offshoot of the higher Primates. Thus not merely has conceptual thought been evolved only in man: it could not have been evolved except in man. There is but one path of unlimited progress through the evolutionary maze. The course of human evolution is as unique as its result. It is unique not in the trivial sense of being a different course from that of any other organism, but in the profounder sense of being the only path that could have achieved the essential characters of man.

Here, then, in the formidably long view of the biologist, we are—not through our own merit, not (at least in Professor Huxley's view) under the will of God—but merely because the evolving pattern of life has happened to pin the badge of progress on our coat. We can still go somewhere. We can if we like quicken enormously and render purposive the slow, blind beneficence of evolution. We can honour this unasked for obligation, or we can destroy ourselves. Where do we go to next?

At this point one remembers Professor Huxley's partial responsibility for the publication of *The Science of Life*, which was certainly one of the pregnant educational advances of the last decade. Most of his present essays are reasoned pleas, from various angles, for a science of social relationship—even the comic relief of a review of *Who's Who* has its oblique implications. He faces squarely enough the enormous difficulties involved in the distinction between the natural and the social sciences. We know nearly all there is to know of the strength of a strut, a problem of physics and engineering which can be exactly stated in a limited number of variables and exactly solved. We know a good deal, though not all, about the healthy working of a human leg. But when we come to the health of one of the main limbs of a state, the civil service or the justiciary, how much do we know? The factors of the problem are now innumerable; the mere obtrusion of value as a dominant among the variables demands a new experimental technique; man has become his own guinea-pig. Professor Huxley argues in fact that the social scientist in approaching such a question is now in the position of a natural scientist before the time of Bacon. Individually, through the natural sciences, man has obtained a terribly complete control over his external environment, terrible because in the failure of the social organism to control either its external environment or to organise its internal one it is driving him to frustration and despair. It is fatally easy to press nonsensical connections between biology and sociology, but accepting the evolution of the human brain as a valid analogue, Professor Huxley estimates society's present brain as reptilian. The major task of the social sciences is to grow society a brain, to make ourselves collectively as self-conscious, as subtly responsive to external environment and internal organisation as we are individually. In one small corner of this field there is already high-speed advance. The brilliant young science of genetics could be a powerful ally of eugenics if only the twin factors of nature and nurture in heredity were properly handled. In any case the lunatic claims for Nordic and Aryan superiority, as well as those sometimes emanating from our own Imperialists, can be ruthlessly exploded. Professor Huxley does so by stating the complicated, undramatic, mathematical facts which are all that can truthfully be attached to the meaning of such propaganda-counters as "race" and "national characteristics."

Finally, having marshalled in many orders his facts, Professor Huxley states his faith, which is rationalist, humanistic, godless, and religious, and carries nobly all the bleaker implications of the uniqueness of man. "My final belief is in life" is his last word. This may seem trite, but not to one who has caught the fine sweep of his argument, which echoes in it and makes it profound.

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NARVIK

With the Foreign Legion at Narvik. By CAPITAINE PIERRE O. LAPIE. Translated by ANTHONY MERRYN. *Murray.* 5s.

The Fight for Narvik: Impressions of the Polish Campaign in Norway. By KAROL ZBYCZEWSKI and JOSEF NATANSON. *Lindsay Drummond.* 5s.

Captain Lapie's book on Narvik makes excellent and lively reading. The author, though he earned the *Croix de Guerre* in the Norwegian campaign, remains very much in the background; what he tells us is the gloriously human story of the men of the 13th Demi-Brigade of the Foreign Legion. Its setting is the awakening of nature in the Arctic:

> The Colonel was wonderful. Standing on top of the ridge in the sunshine, in full view of the enemy, freshly shaved, his sword-belt brightly polished, his medals flashing, his ski-spectacles pushed up over his helmet to enable him to follow the movements of his troops through field glasses, his coolness was incredible.
>
> A flat rock by his side served him for a desk. "*Nom de Dieu de Norvégiens!*" yelled Commander Boyer-Resses.
>
> "You can't expect everybody to fight for 25 years."
>
> Boyer-Resses looked at him, puzzled.
>
> "Yes, you and I have been fighting since 1914—that makes 25 years. These boys have been fighting for twenty minutes. Still, if we carry on with the war here, I reckon they'll make excellent soldiers in twenty days."

They were not destined to stay another twenty days. After the remarkable part the Foreign Legion played in the difficult capture of Narvik—after all the other Allied land

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operations in Norway had failed—and when they were on the point of driving the Germans across the frontier into Sweden, the order came to re-embark. The men grumbled; but it was not until they returned to France and heard Pétain's broadcast on June 17th that they wept. They then took a ship and went to England. Since then they have gone to the Cameroons, while Captain Lapie himself has left for Africa as the Free French Governor of the Chad Territory.

But before leaving this country, he wrote this little book. It is written with a remarkable eye for character and detail. Like the magnificent lame, bullet-riddled Colonel, all the legionaries—united in the comradeship of *Vive la Mort*—are superbly alive. Their talk is pungent and humorous. The Spaniards who fought at Guadalajara refer to the Norwegian mountains as *sierra*. Their relations with the Norwegians are not without comedy. The men are inadequately equipped; they depend largely on stores captured from the Germans—who have *their* stores constantly replenished by parachute dropping 'planes; they lose many of their men; and they know vaguely that while they are fighting a kind of Red Indian war in the wilds of the Arctic, France is being overrun by the German armoured divisions. It is that which, more than anything else, gives this full-blooded, almost happy war book an undercurrent of doom. But the reader, like the spectator of a Greek tragedy, is more conscious of it than the actors themselves. What an amazing fellow this Lapie must be! One would never have thought that an intellectual, very Parisian, Front Populaire Deputy could be so much in love with action, danger, and adventure. His book has something of the quality of Malraux's *L'Espoir*, and of St. Exupéry at his best. Lapie represents that French spirit in which we still want to believe; the France of the future—one hopes.

The Fight for Narvik deals with the part played in the battle of Narvik by the Polish Highland Brigade. It is written in a uniformly and conventionally heroic style, and except for the pathetically-amusing attempts made by the Poles to persuade themselves that Norway "looks very like Poland," the story lacks that human interest with which every page of Lapie is packed. Finally, without wanting to be unappreciative, one must confess that the photographs in Lapie's book give one a much better idea of what Narvik looked like than M. Natanson's very "arty" drawings or linocuts.

M. S. SINCLAIR

THE SOLDIER WHO LOST HIMSELF

The Currents of War. By LIDDELL HART. *Hutchinson. 12s. 6d.*

Tall, spare, austere, with a touch of unworldliness and *noblesse oblige* both about his personality and his writings, Captain Liddell Hart, in spite of his military profession, has seemed to live not so much the life of a soldier as that of a creative artist; an artist's life absorbed, in his case, by a struggle against two ghosts: first the ghost of long-gone cavalry warfare which still haunted the strange mind of the British War Office; and second (after 1939) the ghost of that Liddell Hart whom he himself had created in reaction against the last war.

For, ironically enough, when Nazi tanks raced across France and Wavell's across Libya, among the military reputations which tumbled was that of Liddell Hart, who almost twenty years ago had predicted these very mechanised forces and this same mobile type of war. Only yesterday he seemed still the outstanding military mind of his age. To-day, take any youthful British officer chatting to his friends against a bar: "Oh, Liddell Hart? The fellow who thought we could beat Jerry by just sitting on the defensive? All that 'three to one' defensive stuff? That's all exploded to-day." Having dismissed Liddell Hart, our young officer of 1941 passes into his own unknown military future.

This present volume, in which Liddell Hart has annotated a selection of his writings and predictions spread over fifteen years, may offer a psychological clue to his strange fate.

It is fascinating to re-read some of his early essays of the 'twenties and to realise just how brilliantly, at a time when such ideas were officially scoffed at, he foresaw the campaigns of 1940–41. As in this passage, printed in 1925:

> Once appreciate that tanks are not an extra arm or a mere aid to infantry, but the modern form of heavy cavalry and their true military use is obvious—to be concentrated and used in as large masses as possible against the Achilles heel of the enemy army: the communications and command centres which form its nerve system. Then not only may we see the rescue of mobility from the toils of trench-warfare, but with it the revival of generalship and the art of war, in contrast to its mere mechanics. Instead of machines threatening to become the masters of men, as they actually did in 1914–18 . . . the tank assault of tomorrow is but the long awaited rebirth of the cavalry charge, with the merely material change that moving fire is added to the shock and that the armoured cavalry tank replaces the vulnerable cavalry horse.

Or this, a year later:

> Even for the proportion of infantry who are kept, as land marines, to fight on foot, there must be a change. Not only must they be motor-moved to the scene of action—the foot-slogging soldier is as quaint a survival in the modern world

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Mrs. SMITH replies to Mr. J. B. PRIESTLEY in this week's

"FORWARD"

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26, CIVIC STREET, GLASGOW, C.4.

PURELY PERSONAL

MAJOR quartered in Irak wishes to know the Coptic for "A box of King Six 8d. Cigars please."

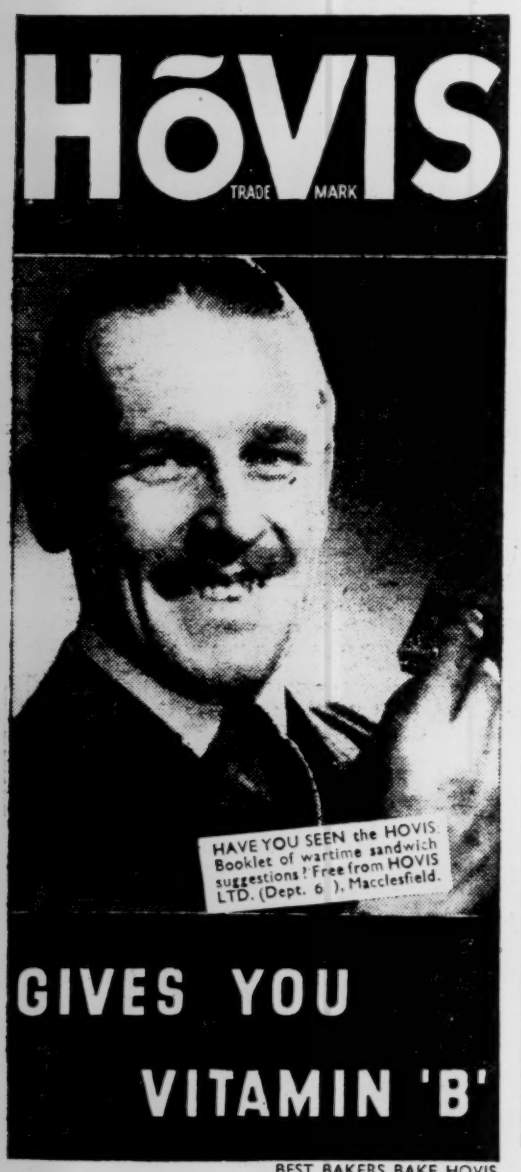
as the hansom cab—but they must develop their battlefield mobility . . . " the men who fight on foot " must become light infantry of the Peninsular type, agile groups of skirmishers, who will exploit to the full the tactics of infiltration and manoeuvre.

The early essays abound in such quotations. Some ten years ago at least, Captain Liddell Hart seems to have diagnosed the inherent weakness of the rigid French mass army—its growing inability to adapt itself to mobile warfare. All in all, it is plain that had Captain Liddell Hart been able to impose his views effectively on the War Office, the British Government—when Hitler began to threaten—would have disposed of a first-class striking force of *Panzerdivisionen* backed by adequate aircraft and anti-aircraft guns—and the history of our times would have been different. But his own testimony of the appalling military unpreparedness of Britain under Chamberlain in the 1938 crisis is the best proof of the failure to avert the disasters he foresaw.

And it is at this point that Captain Liddell Hart suddenly ceases to be our military philosopher and guide. Though he might still have been the advocate of a mechanised British striking force (since there was no such force and the Germany beaten in 1918 had been disastrously allowed to re-arm), his writings became dominated by the theme that Britain must at all costs avoid real war—a theme supported by very dubious political arguments and a naive faith in Hitler's promises and " offers " which is almost inexplicable. In these essays we see Captain Liddell Hart badly out of mood with the new, angry spirit of his countrymen. And worse still, since the war actually broke out, he seems to have nothing to say. The last essays in this book, particularly the cautious study on the dismissal of Mr. Hore-Belisha, with whom he had at one time been closely associated, are almost indistinguishable from hackwork, so dull that they might have been written by any of the militarists among whom, ten years earlier, Captain Liddell Hart had shone like a star.

What is the explanation of this fading out of the brilliant military theorist in the time of actual war? One which at once suggests itself is that, though professionally a soldier, Captain Liddell Hart is at bottom a pacifist, with an unrelenting loathing for the grotesque senselessness of war. He is a man burdened by a nightmare—the memory (from which other men turned because of its sheer horror) of the inferno of trench warfare of 1914–18 into which unimaginative British, French and German generals sent their men to be slaughtered in hundreds of thousands in meaningless attacks. To feel, as he did in 1938, that he had failed to change the outlook of the War Office, that the same mixture of pugnacity and obtuseness was at work—that was more than he could bear. Hence his clutching at the straws of possible Nazi reasonableness, as in his suggestion that the Poles should perhaps yield Danzig. Danzig, indeed! Any Polish child could have told " the world's greatest writer on military affairs " (as he allowed his publishers to call him on the dust-cover), that it was not Danzig but all Poland which was at stake.

But the fault goes even deeper than that. Take Britain in 1939, headed by Chamberlain and the blind Old Men of Munich, with its slums and unemployed, its drift and indifference, its sensation-newspapers appealing to every instinct of fear and self-preservation—was it possible for such a disintegrating and morally indefensible social system to produce the resolute, modern, scientific military force behind which it could retire into *dynamic* defensive against the Nazis? It is Captain Liddell Hart's fundamental weakness that he has not grasped that any military force can only be the social reflection of the society of which it is part: and that the failure to mechanise the British and French armies was due not to individual stupidity but to the class opposition (the Catholic reactionary military clique in France and the Old School Tie Diehards in England) to the social and political changes mechanisation would bring in its train. Though Captain Liddell Hart does seem to be aware of the indivisibility of military, social and moral factors in modern war, in fact, however, he hardly mentions the latter. In the very last lines of the book, indeed, he ventures a few brief words about the need of a " new order " in Britain as the spear-head of a psychological counter-offensive. But Captain Liddell Hart should realise that such a conception should not be the vague end of a book, but its concrete starting-point, and that it is his task to discover what kind of rejuvenated British society could produce his scientific military force. Then and then only could his military genius become fertile again. T. R. FYVEL


HOVIS
TRADE MARK
HAVE YOU SEEN the HOVIS Booklet of wartime sandwich suggestions? Free from HOVIS LTD. (Dept. 6), Macclesfield.
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BEST BAKERS BAKE HOVIS

CROMWELL

A Selection from the Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell. Edited by L. C. BENNETT. Foreword by RT. HON. ISAAC FOOT. *Nelson.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

In this volume Miss Bennett has made a selection from Carlyle's *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell.* Mr. Isaac Foot in a foreword says that the place of Carlyle's book in English literature is impregnable. This judgment needs to be qualified. As a compilation of material not previously collected, Carlyle's book has great value. But the book is defaced by much matter from Carlyle's own pen, ranging from brief cries of ecstasy or scorn interpolated into the text of the letters and speeches, to lengthy misinterpretations of events, such misinterpretations being always wholly favourable to Cromwell and wholly unfavourable to his opponents. Carlyle on Cromwell is as hysterical as a schoolgirl writing in her diary about a favourite film star, but what is bearable and even touching in a young girl is repulsive in a grizzled prophet. A warped unhappy man, craving for the relief of violence, but with enough spiritual insight to shrink from this craving, Carlyle found in Cromwell exactly the hero he was looking for, a man with an insatiable appetite for power combined with a capacity, remarkable even among Puritans, for identifying Mammon with God.

Carlyle's view of Cromwell was, naturally enough, congenial to the Victorians. Since the last war, however, attempts to reverse it have been made, notably by Hilaire Belloc and some of his disciples. The ill-will in these attempts was not seconded by much skill, a point repeatedly made by these critics being that Cromwell's real name was Williams, which for some unexplained reason was supposed to diminish his stature as a great man of action to vanishing point. While this campaign was in progress, first Mussolini and then Hitler rose to power, and as neither of them had heard of any Englishman except Cromwell, the English began to think about Cromwell again, with a feeling of nostalgia which deepened year by year. Last June, after the collapse of France, this feeling burst out in frequent quotations in the press from the letters Cromwell wrote at the beginning of the Civil War. The instinct of a nation in a time of crisis is sound, and the Cromwell that rose before men's minds was not Carlyle's God-inspired ruler, but the man who in the summer of 1643 stood between the victorious Royalists and the fumbling Parliamentarians.

Miss Bennett's anthology appears therefore at an opportune moment and is a very interesting volume, from which a vivid idea of Cromwell's complex character in a good many of its aspects can be gathered. The book is dedicated to John Buchan, and it is apparent, both from the fifty pages of introductory matter and from the passages selected, that Miss Bennett's view of Cromwell is similar to that contained in Buchan's biography. Buchan did everything at the right moment, and his biography came out just as the English were beginning to wish for an English version of Mussolini and Hitler. As presented by Buchan, Cromwell was inferior in action to Caesar and Napoleon only because he was so good, so honest; but so transcendent nevertheless were his gifts that they were able to carry his goodness without much impairment of their efficiency.

To make this view of Cromwell credible it is necessary to leave out much and to misunderstand more. There is hardly anything about Ireland in Miss Bennett's anthology. " The omission of the Drogheda dispatch," she says, " will perhaps be noted and censured." Equally to be censured is the absence of any reference in Miss Bennett's introduction to Cromwell's merciless settlement of the Irish problem. Cromwell did not delight in cruelty, he was good-natured and even affectionate with those who did not interfere with his designs, but the test of a man's virtue is how he behaves when his passions are moved, not what he is like in carpet slippers over a glass of ale. Cromwell was not a conscious hypocrite, but he was at the mercy of his craving for power, which was supported by an intuitive sense of when and where to strike, both in war and in civil life, far superior to Napoleon's and fully equal to Caesar's. Viewed as a saint who happened to find himself in situations unfamiliar to most saints, he cannot be understood at all. His execution of Charles will seem to be actuated by disgust at duplicity, his democratic phase will spring from compassion for the poor, his return to a hierarchical conception of society to a patient attending on a more propitious moment for realising his democratic dreams, and so on. This figure does not resemble Cromwell or any other man who has risen from obscurity to supreme power. On the other hand it is just

UNITED KINGDOM PROVIDENT INSTITUTION

A Century of Steady Progress

SIR ERNEST BENN'S REVIEW

In view of the fact that many members of the United Kingdom Provident Institution may be unable to attend the annual general meeting to be held on March 26th, the following statement by the Chairman (Sir Ernest Benn, Bt.) has been circulated in advance with the report and accounts.

TO the Members of the United Kingdom Temperance and General Provident Institution.

The hundredth report and accounts of the United Kingdom Life Office have perforce to be presented without all those festive flourishes with which they would have been accompanied in more normal circumstances.

Our business in 1940 has been carried on with a single eye to the winning of the war. Every penny of our surplus for 1940 has been applied to War Loan, and we have also realised other investments so that in the year three-quarters of a million sterling has been lent to the Government at an unremunerative and artificial rate.

FALLACY OF "CHEAP MONEY"

In every speech that I have made to our members I have protested against the folly and injustice of the "cheap money" policy. "Cheap money" has achieved none of the purposes in mind when the policy was inaugurated. For instance, it failed altogether to stimulate trade. The injustice of "cheap money" is seen very clearly by a glance at the war figures. One per cent. added to the rate of interest on new borrowings would have cost the nation in 1940 something in the neighbourhood of £20,000,000 gross. Since the war more than 10 times that sum has been added to our wages bill. Thus the spenders have been encouraged and the savers discouraged at the very moment when it is vital that we should all spend less and save more.

I mention wages only because the figures are available, but nobody doubts that if, in the hurry and excitement of battle, we had been able to pay proper attention to economy, £20,000,000 a year could have been secured out of all the extravagance which surrounds us.

I have no desire to open all the controversial questions which these figures suggest, but as the savers now outnumber the wage-earners some of the old arguments may need reconsideration. Just as it is necessary to make it worth while to work, so it is also necessary to make it worth while to save. An accepted policy which coupled good wages with a more general recognition of the virtue and value of thrift for its own sake would lift us all on to a higher and safer economic level.

The accumulation of capital by the wage-earners in the last few decades is, perhaps, the best of all the social improvements of our time. The opportunity now presents itself rapidly to accelerate that healthy process and, by so doing, to make both past and present savings safe. In this way the war gives an opportunity for a social revolution second only in importance to the winning of the war itself. Furthermore, if wisdom and justice are applied to the arrangement of these matters, we can enhance our ability to deal with those economic and employment problems that will arise when the war is won.

PATRIOTISM AND SAVINGS

It was at one time said by some people with derision, by others with pride, that patriotism and 5 per cent. went together. Lord Kindersley has shown that patriotism and 2½ per cent. can go a very long way together or, indeed, that patriotism of itself is in some cases enough for the moment. We have witnessed the most wonderful display of the qualities of the voluntary principle in the National Savings Campaign. It should be noted, however, that the success so far achieved has been based upon patriotism, and that self-interest has been almost left out of account. It must remain a matter of conjecture whether, if Lord Kindersley had, as in the last war, been able to offer reasonable investment terms, the results of his campaign might not have been sufficient to close completely the dangerous gap between revenue and spending, and to rid us safely of the horrid bogy of inflation.

"Cheap money" has been maintained by the dangerous process of short-term borrowing. It has transformed the nature of the public debt, most of which is now repayable within comparatively short periods. I make bold to wonder whether, by this short-term device, we have not, in fact, done something to weaken the character and quality of, and the confidence in, what used to be known as "the funds."

ADAM SMITH ON NATIONAL DEBTS

"When national debts," says Adam Smith, "have once been accumulated to a certain degree there is scarcely, I believe, a single instance of their having been fairly and completely paid. The liberation of the public revenue, if it has ever been brought about at all, has always been brought about by a bankruptcy; sometimes by an avowed one, but always by a real one, though frequently by a pretended payment."

NEW BUSINESS

Our new business figure at £2,616,000 is the lowest since 1923. We are 35 per cent. below 1939 and 49 per cent. less than 1938. This compares with average reductions in all the leading life offices of 36 per cent. on 1939 and 49 per cent. on 1938.

It will, therefore, be seen that we have maintained our position in the market.

It must, however, be confessed that we ourselves have not thought it wise to press for new business. We have not felt justified in offering to share with outsiders funds which belong to existing members on terms which may prove to be unremunerative. "Cheap money" means dearer life assurance.

EXPENSE RATIO

I am pleased to report a further drop in our expense ratio from 14.6 per cent. to 14.0 per cent. This satisfactory figure is chiefly due to the saving of procuring commission on the lower new business figure.

RATE OF INTEREST

We have succeeded in earning during 1940 a highly satisfactory rate of interest—£5 0*s.* 11*d.* per cent. gross and £3 12*s.* 5*d.* per cent. net. These figures represent the return upon the book value of our investments.

MORTALITY AND CLAIMS

The claims by death in 1940 were somewhat heavier than in the previous year, but were still within the numbers and amounts expected under the modern tables upon which we base our comparison. In numbers of claims we had 87 per cent., and in amounts paid 98 per cent. of the expected figures. These percentages include all the war claims which we have so far been called upon to meet. Payments made under endowment assurances in consequence of the survival of our members to the date of maturity are slightly below the record million-pound level reached in 1939. These payments were all fully provided for and do not constitute any strain upon the funds.

BONUSES

Wars and bonuses are incompatible, and the question of bonus must remain in abeyance while we are still in doubt on the vital question of the value of our assets. Your board will maintain the unbroken tradition of a century of success and put long-term security in front of any temporary consideration. With a hundred years of experience to draw upon I am confident that in the long run we shall be able to maintain our remarkable bonus record and that the member who pins his faith to the with profit policy will, as always, have reason to be proud of his judgment.

VALUE OF ASSETS

Any discussion of the value of our assets in the circumstances of to-day would be little more than wild speculation. We know that the depreciation of our Stock Exchange securities reckoned at the official prices of December 31st is more than covered by our reserve of £1,000,000. Seeing, however, that there is only a nominal market behind current Stock Exchange quotations the statement is of less value than would normally be the case.

As to our properties, our vast interests in real estate as ground landlords, mortgagees, freeholders, and leaseholders in some £10,000,000 of land and bricks and mortar, it is more difficult to offer worthwhile opinions.

ENHANCED POST-WAR VALUES

Against all that we bear in mind that the value of bricks and mortar after the war is likely to be greater than before, and it is not impossible that increases in such values may of themselves go some way to balance any losses inflicted upon us. However that may be, I should be lacking in a proper sense of the responsibilities attaching to the office of your chairman were I to commit myself to any definite view on these matters. On one point and one only can I be precise, definite, and emphatic. Eighteen months of devastating warfare have not raised a doubt in my mind that we are, and shall continue to be, able to meet to the full every claim that is made upon us.

WARM TRIBUTE TO THE STAFF

I cannot speak too highly of the splendid body of men and women which for the moment I have the honour to command. The institution owes a heavy debt to my colleague, Mr. P. G. Leveritt, its chief officer. He has literally slaved in your interests. Without regard to health or holidays, he has set an example to all of us in the year under review. That example has been loyally followed by all the officers and every member of the heavily depleted staff. Eighty-four of our men have joined the Forces, more than half our male staff, and of these we mourn one killed and do our best to keep in touch with three prisoners of war.

ACQUISITION OF FIRE AND ACCIDENT COMPANY

In the early part of the year advantage was taken of an opportunity to take over the United Kingdom fire, accident, and general business of a leading Canadian office, the Dominion of Canada General Insurance Company. In this very simple and satisfactory way we were enabled to set up side by side with the business of the institution a company with an established connection, an expert staff, and full facilities for conducting every class of insurance business except life and marine.

This very satisfactory transaction concerns the balance-sheet in your hands only as an investment—an investment, I may say, of which we have the highest hopes. Members will, however, be quick to realise that the close associations thus established with a company bearing a similar name, doing general as distinct from life business, may have a highly beneficial effect upon the business-getting capacity both of the institution and of the new office.

THE INSTITUTION'S CENTENARY

On November 9th, 1940, this institution became 100 years old. We completed a full century of good work and good fortune. No wars, revolutions, or other upheavals have ever had more than a passing influence upon our steady progress. We can look back over that century and search the records of our predecessors and take great satisfaction in the story of 100 years which contains no single incident or episode of which we need be anything but proud.

That is a very remarkable and very exceptional claim. We planned to hold appropriate celebrations which must now be postponed until the war is over.

But we have not delayed the practical parts of our centenary programme; indeed, the war has helped us with the task of overhauling our organisation. We have completed the transformation to modern mechanised accountancy and start our second century with the maximum of efficiency.

We have centralised all collections and set free the whole of the energies of our 21 branch staffs for new business, when they return from the war and the market again becomes normal. We have introduced the five-day week and now work full speed from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday to Friday. We have put all fees, salaries and wages on to a gross basis and thus abandoned the old, and much misunderstood, tax-free practice. Furthermore, as mentioned above, we have established the United Kingdom Fire and Accident Insurance Company.

In these and other minor ways we have polished our equipment and we start our second century full of pride in the past and faith in the future.

what is needed by those who, like Mr. Isaac Foot in his foreword to this volume, look upon Cromwell as the greatest of Englishmen.

HUGH KINGSMILL

Week-end Competitions

No. 580

Set by Roger Marvell

Mr. A. P. Herbert, writing in *Punch*, seems to be under the delusion that the reviewing staff of this journal has emigrated *en bloc* to the U.S.A. In fact none of our regular contributors has gone to America, but a number of them are in uniform. We offer the usual prizes for a set of verses (not more than 12 lines), such as a soldier, sailor or airman might write, comparing his present activities with his old work of reviewing, in these columns, novels, paintings, films, or gramophone records.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, March 24th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 577

Set by Thomas Smallbones

Competitors are asked to imagine that, in face of the coming drink shortage they have been appointed publicity manager to a newly created Ministry of Drink. The usual prizes are offered for the best set of three "Drink Facts" suitable either for the Ministry's advertisements or for the Minister's public pronouncements.

Report by Thomas Smallbones

From the Drink Front there came in a large batch of suggestions, many of which succeeded admirably in catching the sunshine Children's Hour blandness with which Ministries saccharine their pills. Among those which disregarded the model, several sent in good slogans. *Be content with one under the eight* (Jack Mander). *Half a glass is better than no bread* (L. Marshall Jones). *Gravity is a condition of drink. Don't upset it!* (H. P. Blunt), *Three-quarters of you is WATER. Be consistent.* (H. L. V. S.).

And, since the ministries like verse in their advertising, several pleasing verses, but all more sophisticated than the originals.

The dinner host must never say
"Let's have another bottle."
The bloke who treats in humbler way
Must give up asking "What'll"?

GORDON SIMPSON

People with the will to win
Cheerfully forgo their gin,
Knowing that the licensed victualler
Is the unconscious friend of Hitler.

I. R. I. S.

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
But not with beer and wine;
The thirst that from their gaze doth rise
Will be a drink divine. ROBERT WITT

Then there were some admirable pieces from the Minister's speeches:

"There is enough liquor in this country, being sold at prices which will enable all to have their share. But I warn the public that I shall fine, and fine heavily, any who are found exceeding their natural capacity. The man who can get drunk on 3 beers must stop at 2. Those who need 5 must stop at 4, and so on. This is no time for conviviality, but for earnest endeavour." D. D. R.

"The policy of my department is a milk-and-water policy and I can assure hon. members that we have unlimited supplies." Any shortage, he went on to say, could be put down to local difficulties in reception: there was no restriction at the fountain head. E. E. WALLACE.

A great many ingenious recipes were sent in for home-made beers and wines and cocktails ("your party will be a success right from the Alert"). But their facetiousnes is rather tiring in bulk. The drink hints were amusing and varied:

"Have you ever stopped to think how many things are unrationed, some of the most vital things too. One old Greek sage said that water was the origin of all things. What a world of wisdom in those words. For hot nourishing drinks give your family boiled Tap Water . . ." MRS. M. BARDSLEY

"The first duty on beer was imposed in the reign of King Charles the First. He lost his head, but don't lose yours! Stick to the official quota of Pool beer, the standard government beverage." ACK. R.

"The longer you make your half-pint last the more GOOD it does you.

The latest fashion at the Dorchester is drinking beer with a teaspoon. Try it yourself.

Beer drunk with a small spoon lasts longer, tastes better, makes you merrier, keeps you fit, and helps the war effort.

Be a beer-spooner. Join the Spooner's circle."

STEVE

"We are an island kingdom—the water is our very backbone—and yet it is not perhaps until now that we are realising the value of this, our real national beverage.

Water, with its unique combination of hydrogen and oxygen, is a drink with life-giving properties and is the best-known guard against thirst. . . ."

D. S. PRICKLEY

Other competitors whom I marked for quotation were Ann Tirard, Irene Nicholson, John Thornton, P. Baggalley, Mrs. Randle and Howard Pekin; but space was too short. For first prize I recommend B. T. for variety and fatuousness. And the second prize to be divided between W. H. Blake and Marjorie Nicholls.

FIRST PRIZE

DRINK FACTS FROM THE WATER FRONT.

No. 1.

"He drinks his bath water" will become the hallmark of the patriotic Britisher.

No. 2.

There are no end to the delightful ways in which this water can be served. Place a lemon in it for ten minutes and remove. The lemon can be used over and over again, and you will be surprised at the flavour. If you haven't a lemon, a similar flavour can be obtained by steaming the water for half an hour in a double saucepan.

No. 3.

Cautionary Tale.

If you're poor or if you've means
Drink the water from your greens;
Those who pour it down the sink,
Waste a most delicious drink. B. T.

SECOND PRIZES

I

DRINK FACTS

No. 1.

WATCH the animals. You will see that no animal drinks with its food.

COPY the animals by drinking between meals, not at them. Your body will then become lithe and supple like an animal's body.

No. 2.

A large part of solid food is water; nearly the whole of a potato, three parts of a fish, and one half of a loaf. This water in food gives your bodies much of the fluid they need.

ENOUGH is better than a flood.

No. 3.

Save the liquid from cooked vegetables and drink it.

CABBAGE CORDIAL will make your cheeks, as well as your outlook, rosy.

POTATO POTION adds pep to your thinking.

CARROTS, grated into butter muslin and squeezed will yield the jolly-looking and protective CARROT COCKTAIL. MARJORIE NICHOLLS

II.

DRINK FACTS

No. 1.

Mild beer is plentiful. Though not so strong as pre-war heavier gravity drinks it carries an even heavier duty. There are two good reasons why you should drink mild beer. First: it is wet and an excellent thirst quencher. Secondly: it is now the only alcoholic drink you can buy.

No. 2.

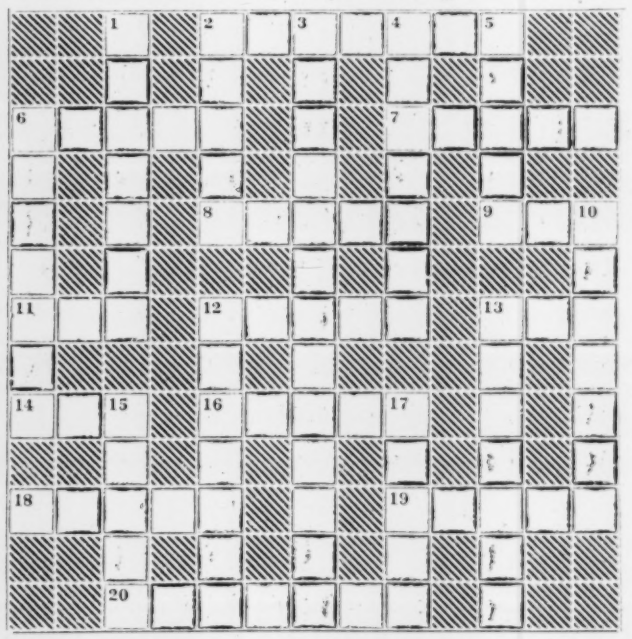
Beer helps you to keep cheerful. Why not drink mild beer for breakfast, dinner, and tea as well as supper? It is home-produced—there is no scarcity of water—and because of the skilful reduction of the gravity it is most beneficial for flushing the kidneys. Keep fit and be cheerful on mild beer.

No. 3.

Beer is up in price! Thanks to the increased revenue duty imposed by the Chancellor you will now pay a shilling a pint for mild beer, but you will get full value for your money. Out of every shilling 9d. goes to help the national war effort. Drink a pint for breakfast, dinner, tea and supper and do your bit. You can buy Savings Certificates, but beer is best!

W. H. BLACK

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 23 *Set by* V. S.



The last week's winner is:

J. B. Morton, 23 Lanchester Road, N.6

ACROSS.

2. Graduate and so on. (7)
6. Brandy highball? (5)
7. May have the makings of successful parents. (5)
8. S.A. from birth. (5)
9 & 14. Waterboy! (6)
11. Relied on suppressing the political extremist. (3)
12 *rev.* Return to her. (5)
13. Wild year in the reign of Ethelred the Unready. (3)
14. See 9.
16. Daddy Buddy. (5)
18. As the Frenchman said, it has to *do!* (5)
19. Like a layer of dust (5)
20. Rebuilt W. Ely ever so prettily! (7)

DOWN.

1. The bare portion is certain to be under-weight. (7)
2. Animal Grab is once disgraced. (5)
3. *EXTEND A.*, in spite of Euclid's definition (7, 1 & 5)
4. Shakespearean character rising to answer the telephone. (7)
5. Generally ask to be driven home. (5)
6. Contemptible overalls? (7)
10. The dog and I neither returned. (7)
12. Correct to make dough rise again. (7)
13. Chicken for 4? (7)
15 *rev.* Upholstering material maybe. (5)
17. Behold the Beloved, evidently just out of Bed. (5)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

O	R	C	H	I	D	■	F	O	R	M	I	C
S	■	O	■	■	■	■	■	■	A	■	U	■
P	A	S	T	R	Y	■	O	B	I	T	E	R
R	■	S	■	E	■	G	■	U	■	R	■	A
E	■	E	■	A	L	L	O	T	■	O	■	T
Y	■	T	■	R	■	U	■	T	■	N	■	E
■	■	■	F	L	A	T	T	E	N	■	■	■
I	■	H	■	I	■	T	■	R	■	B	■	P
S	■	O	■	G	R	O	I	N	■	E	■	R
A	■	T	■	H	■	N	■	U	■	F	■	I
B	I	D	E	T	S	■	S	T	R	A	I	N
E	■	O	■	■	■	■	■	■	L	■	N	■
L	E	G	A	T	E	■	R	E	A	L	L	Y

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

LEASE AND LEND DOLLARS?—HOME RAILWAYS AND CANADIAN PACIFIC—CONCENTRATION OF STOCK EXCHANGE STAFFS

THE enactment of the Lease and Lend Bill may ease immediately the shipping position in the Atlantic but it cannot ease the dollar position for some time to come. Past orders have to be paid for. According to the bulletin of the Federal Reserve Board we had left at the end of last year $2,167 millions of exchange assets of which only $1,811 millions were regarded by the British Treasury as available. By the end of this year net dollar expenditures will have reduced this amount, it is officially estimated, to only $347 millions. In other words, we shall then have virtually exhausted our gold and dollar resources. Sir Edward Peacock, a director of the Bank of England and a partner in Barings, is now busy in the United States negotiating the sale of our direct dollar investments such as the subsidiary companies of our great international companies. He had better hurry, for the next two months are going to make our dollar position very tight. The requisitioning of these direct investments will inevitably bring great loss and inconvenience to the British parent companies, just as the requisitioning of marketable dollar securities has inflicted great hardship on a number of private investors. It is therefore incumbent on the Treasury to comb out the renegade capitalists who, in order to escape income tax and surtax, formed private investment trusts in Canada, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, Monaco, and the Isle of Man in recent years and bought packets of American securities in bearer form through their bank nominees. Before the decent capitalist has to suffer, let the indecent be made to disgorge their secret dollar holdings. What happens to the sterling rate when we have finally come to an end of our dollar resources I do not know. Does the American Treasury then lease or lend, dollars? It would be a fine gesture—and a fine preliminary exercise for the post-war period when the pound sterling is bound to slump badly unless it has American support.

* * *

The full accounts of the Canadian Pacific Railway for 1940 have encouraged some "butts" of the 4 per cent. preference stock now quoted at 52. The net earnings, they argue, are the best for ten years and the preference dividend is covered four times. I would point out that a railway which cannot cover its preference dividends in time of war when railway traffics are swollen even more than in a peacetime industrial boom, does not deserve to be a common carrier. And as regards the preference dividend cover the arithmetic is all wrong. If the net earnings are divided by the interest charges plus the preference dividend (the correct mathematics) it will be found that the preference stock dividend is covered only 1.2 times. So I would not advocate a change from L.M. and S. 4 per cent. preference at 49 (covered 1.3 times) into Canadian Pacific 4 per cent. preference at 52, but rather the reverse. Looking to the post-war future I regard the L.M.S. preference stock as more stable. The competition between the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National railways will break out perhaps in worse form in the first slump which overtakes the armistice boom. And the dividend record of Canadian Pacific preference, under conditions of peacetime competition and slump, is not nearly so good as that of L.M. and S. preference. But what, you ask, would a peacetime slump bring to L.M. and S.? Certainly, nationalisation, and it would be difficult for any Government administering an exchange scheme for railway stockholders to give the L.M. and S. preference stockholders a bad deal in view of the past dividend record. As Lord Stamp pointed out at the L.M. and S. stockholders meeting the average return on L.M. and S. capital in the eighteen years since amalgamation has been only 3⅓ per cent. or £107½ millions below the amount which Parliament considers to be a fair reward for the owners. Even allowing for some watering of the capital, which Lord Stamp himself will not admit, it cannot be said that the railway stockholders have been profiteers. I conclude, therefore, that as a bet on post-war nationalisation or reconstruction, L.M. and S. preference stocks present a much better gamble than Canadian Pacific and I would advise an exchange from the latter without much hesitation.

* * *

The sound principle in war of concentrating output, which is now being applied by the Board of Trade to a number of industries, should be studied by the Committee of the Stock Exchange and applied to jobbers and brokers. It is a gross waste of man-power for jobbers and brokers, where business has been reduced, like that of the restricted home trader, to a minor percentage of their pre-war turnover, to maintain each their own nucleus of clerical staff. It is one of the worst exhibitions of the spread-over system. The Committee of the Stock Exchange should therefore press home their scheme of central clearing. Instead of each jobber and broker maintaining a staff to clear the stocks and shares dealt in by the public, one central office (in other words a branch of the Share and Loan Department) could do the job at a quarter of the cost in labour and money. This is a long overdue reform and one which should be imposed not only for war, but for peace. In the roaring days of the armistice when a boom in equity shares will find the brokers ill-equipped to deal with the rising tide of business a central clearing office is the only alternative to chaos.

Company Meeting

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY

WARTIME DIFFICULTIES
EFFICIENT WORKING

MR. CHARLES J. HAMBRO'S STATEMENT

THE Annual General Meeting of the Great Western Railway Company was held on Wednesday at Paddington Station, London.

Mr. Charles J. Hambro, the chairman, in the course of his speech, said: I have been seriously concerned at the criticisms which from time to time have been directed against the Railways in regard to the working of both passenger and freight trains. What I have in mind are public criticisms designed to create the impression that the Railways are inefficient and that the only remedy is nationalisation or some other form of public control. Whatever views one may hold on this question, this is not the time to waste the energies of those responsible for running the machine by an academic discussion of the merits or demerits of alternative policies which might be adopted at some future date. The Railways are a vital cog in the war machine and it would be very unfortunate if, for example, new schemes urgently required for the working of wartime traffic were held up merely to ensure that they conformed to some particular standard, or if methods of working adopted by individual Companies and functioning satisfactorily are to be altered for the sake of uniformity under some new form of organisation which critics and others desire to advocate.

It would not be in the national interest to give any details of the work which the Railways are performing at the present time or of the difficulties which they have to face. I have, however, no hesitation in saying that if we could publish the information which is now being compiled in regard to the part which this Company is playing in this war it would dispose of any criticism of our efficiency.

As you are aware, the Minister of Transport assumed control of the Railways on the outbreak of war, and it is a matter of satisfaction to us to know that although we have recently passed through several years of acute trade depression, our efforts to maintain the track, rolling stock and equipment in a high state of efficiency were never relaxed. I do not think it is generally appreciated what an enormous benefit it has been to the country that the Railways were in such a magnificent condition when we entered the war.

INCREASED VOLUME OF TRAFFIC

The increased volume of traffic which the Railways have carried does not afford any true indication of the work performed by the Railways or the extent of the difficulties with which we have had to contend. The transport requirements under war conditions are, in fact, totally different from those for which we normally cater.

Steps have, of course, been taken to anticipate new situations arising from altered conditions, but in the absence of data from Government Departments as to their probable requirements, which in wartime cannot readily be forecast, it is not possible to plan ahead with any degree of certainty.

I frankly admit that we are unable to offer our passengers facilities which are in any way comparable with those which they enjoyed before the war, nor can we always meet all the demands of traders. This, however, is not due to inefficiency on the part of the Railway Companies. In normal times passenger trains are given precedence over freight trains, whereas today these trains frequently have to be delayed and sometimes even cancelled to make way for Government and freight requirements; thus an added burden is thrown on the trains still running, some of which are frequently too long and overloaded, necessitating their being drawn up twice at the stations at which they call. In wartime public needs must take second place in railway working.

The report and accounts were adopted.

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LECTURES, MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS

ETHICAL CHURCH, Queensway, Bayswater, W.2. Morning Service only. March 16th, at 11.30. H. J. BLACKHAM: "SIR R. VANSITTART'S PAMPHLET 'BLACK RECORD.'"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Sunday, March 16th, at 11 a.m. J. McCABE: "CHANGING HUMAN NATURE." Admission free.

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PINEWOOD, Crowborough, is now at The Fir Hill, Colan, St. Columb, Cornwall. Home school for boys and girls 3 to 13, where environment, diet, psychology and teaching methods still maintain health and happiness. ELIZABETH STRACHAN. St. Mawgan 279.

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India Office,
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THE NEW

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THE STRUGGLE IN THE BALKANS

MORALLY, Mr. Roosevelt's speech on Saturday was a declaration of war upon the Axis: America, as he put it, has "gone into action." It has profoundly influenced the calculations of statesmen all over the world. More especially in the Balkans the outlook has grown for the moment at least much brighter. Ten days ago Jugoslavia was written off as an inevitable loss: she would collapse in isolation as all her neighbours had done. But the days passed without a surrender: the Belgrade correspondents reported the rally of popular opinion to the Greek cause and ours: finally, her mobilisation proceeded steadily. Many happenings in the outer world must have contributed to this more resolute attitude. There was the passage of the Lend-Lease Bill and the President's speech. There was the certainty that British land forces will help the Greeks, if and when the German army in Bulgaria attacks. Our forces in Africa scored fresh and notable successes against the Italians. By a skilful amphibian operation, in which Indian troops played the leading part, backed by the Navy's guns and some Somali levies, Berbera was recaptured and an unpleasant little incident obliterated. Round Tripoli the R.A.F. was active to a degree that may foreshadow further operations. In Abyssinia all the invading armies continued their advance.

All this meant much, but the chief event that must have impressed calculating minds in Belgrade was the dismal failure of yet another ambitious Italian offensive in Albania. The Duce was on the spot to reap the laurels of the expected victory. Massed forces attempted to break through the Greek lines on a narrow front of 2½ miles near Tepeleni. During a week incessant frontal attacks were delivered. All were repulsed with crippling losses, and the Greeks, after taking several thousand prisoners, yielded not a yard of ground. This great effort seems now to be over and observers on the spot predict that a couple of months or so will pass before the exhausted Italians dare attack again. It is probable that this offensive held a definite place in the Axis time-table. It was necessary for what courtesy calls Italian prestige that the Duce should score some success before the German attack begins. It must not be too obvious that it required two Great Powers to defeat the Greeks. So the Germans waited for their partner to score. He is in a worse case than before. What then will the Germans do?

The Germans are probably reluctant to launch an attack on Greece while Jugoslavia, uncommitted and at heart hostile, stands mobilised on their flank. Nor is that all. Our own view has always been that if (1) the Greeks can still immobilise the Italians in Albania and if (2) they can count on British support in Thrace, there is a good chance of stopping a German attack across the Rhodope range through the narrow Struma and Mesta valleys. What would be really dangerous would be a simultaneous drive down the Vardar valley and railway straight at Salonika. In short, what the Germans urgently want from the Jugoslavs is that they should open this Vardar route to their forces. The negotiations drag on in Belgrade. So far as we can sum them up, they amount to this: Jugoslavia refuses to join the Axis: she may sign some vague Pact of Friendship, and she will sell her wheat and pigs in the only market open to her, that of Germany, but she is stubbornly opposed to opening the gates of the Vardar. Between them, Mr. Roosevelt, General Wavell and General Papagos have blocked that road.

All this is well, but there may be something better. If we may believe the *New York Times*, Marshal Chakmak, the Turkish Commander-in-Chief, is on his way to Belgrade. This visit is said to mean that he will there co-ordinate with the Jugoslav Staff their arrangement for defending their respective "zones of security." By this phase they mean (1) that the Jugoslavs could not tolerate a hostile occupation of Salonika, while the Turks could not allow an invader to hold the eastern end of Greek Thrace, where the Maritsa serves as their frontier. We cannot put entire faith in this optimistic account, though it comes from a sober source. If true, it would mean that the Turks and Jugoslavs together would veto any deep German penetration into Greek territory. And it may be true. Watching the boldness of London and Washington, with an eye also on the mood of Moscow, Ankara and Belgrade may simultaneously have reached the conclusion that the Balkan Peninsula is capable of defence. It was not doomed when Sofia capitulated.